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JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING

JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING.

(From photo by Crooke, Edin.)

JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING

HIS LIFE AND WORK

BY

AMELIA HUTCHISON STIRLING, M.A.

JOINT-TRANSLATOR OF SPINOZA'S "ETHIC,"
AUTHOR OF "TORCHBEARERS OF HISTORY," ETC.

WITH PREFACE BY THE RIGHT HON.
VISCOUNT HALDANE OF CLOAN

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PREFACE

It is my privilege to have been invited to write a few lines of preface to the life of one whom I knew well and admired greatly. James Hutchison Stirling was a man of genius, rugged and uncontrollable, yet genius that could not be mistaken for anything less. I knew him first when I was a student at the University, and I saw him from time to time until nearly the period of his death. The man is mirrored in his books, and above all in the greatest of his books, "The Secret of Hegel." To come under the sway of the "Secret" one must have oneself worked hard. Stirling made the meaning as plain as that meaning could be made. But to penetrate into the inmost significance of Reality can under no circumstances be possible without the severest effort at concentration, and this the book demands. But when the effort has been made, and, it may be after several struggles, success has come, the reward follows. I doubt whether a more remarkable piece of exposition has ever been accomplished in our language. It is marvellous that, working at the time he did, without the help of a single worker in the English language who had thrown light on what Hegel really taught, Stirling should have produced the book he did. No one since his time has got further, possibly no one as far. He penetrated into the inmost essence of the

Hegelian system as none but a man of genius could have done, and his work remains unrivalled to this day. His exposition is charged with meaning, and its flow is that of a torrent. No wonder that he held Carlyle in reverence. In different forms the two men applied to different subject-matters the same gift. Both were expositors, but expositors of a genius that made their teaching new and original. "Sartor Resartus" and "The Secret of Hegel" may both be fairly said to have been epoch-making books. Carlyle wrote for the many, Stirling for the very few, and that was the main difference between them. The concentrated work which each bestowed on what he produced was of the order that is colossal.

It is only by grappling with "The Secret of Hegel" that one can realise the extent of its author's power and penetration. Through long years of study he mastered the meaning of that most difficult and most rewarding of modern writers on philosophy. At the end the result he had reached was returned in a torrent; in language the force and picturesqueness of which were only matched by the conviction every sentence breathed forth. The book embodies a result which is likely to be enduring. It will hardly be superseded, for it has the quality of the work of genius. Along the road it has travelled one cannot get any further.

HALDANE OF CLOAN.

LONDON, 3*rd November* 1911

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In one of Stirling's articles on Kant, to which allusion is made in the following pages, this remark occurs: "If the key has been found for the casket of Hegel, and its contents described, it is quite certain that the public has never yet seriously set itself to apply this key or examine these contents. Something to stimulate or assist seems still to be wanting." In the present volume it is hoped that at least a step has been taken towards supplying what is wanting. It has been sought to "stimulate" by laying before the public the record of a life-long devotion to the study and development of the Hegelian philosophy, a life-long conviction of its profound value to humanity. It has been attempted to "assist" by showing that, though it is only the earnest student of philosophy who can ever hope to penetrate to the centre of the Hegelian system, Hegel has yet something to offer to every thoughtful reader. Throughout the later portion of the present book—especially in Chapter VIII., and in those chapters which deal with Stirling's various works—attempts have been made to indicate, in terms intelligible to a technically uninitiated reader, Stirling's general philosophical position, and the nature of the service which he and thinkers such as he have rendered to mankind.

It is impossible to let these pages go to press

without tendering thanks to those who, in various ways, have helped in the task of preparing them—to Mr Alexander Carlyle and Mr Walter Copeland Jerrold for kind permission to make use of valuable letters from Thomas Carlyle and Douglas Jerrold respectively; to Mr W. Hale-White, Mr Holcomb Ingleby, the Rev. John Snaith, Emeritus Professor Campbell Fraser, and the family of the late Professor S. S. Laurie, for kindly lending important letters written by the subject of this memoir, and to Mr Murdoch for the excellent photograph of the philosopher's study, from which one of the illustrations has been taken. Lastly, special thanks are due to Lord Haldane, who, in the midst of the innumerable public claims upon him, has shown that his interest in the higher philosophy is as deep as ever by writing the appreciative and vivid estimate of Stirling which forms the Preface to the present book.

A. H. S.

EDINBURGH, *November* 1911.

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JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING

CHAPTER I

1820-1833

Introductory—Parentage—Boyhood

It is some seven-and-forty years since there issued from the Press a philosophical work, bearing the somewhat sensational title of the *Secret of Hegel*, which has since been said by "those who know" to form a landmark in the history of philosophy. In spite of the apparent incongruity between the unknown author's name on the title-page and the claim to importance put forth by the two solid volumes, the book at once attracted the attention of a wide circle of thoughtful readers. Though half-a-century had passed since the publication of Hegel's *Logik*, and thirty-four since his death, Hegel, if known by name, was still almost totally uncomprehended, not only in Britain, but, as the writer of the *Secret* had found to his cost, even in Germany; and while there were some students of philosophy who, adopting the tactics of the fox in the fable, denounced as unintelligible or worthless what they had failed to understand, there were many for whom the German philosopher's very reputation for obscurity and profundity helped to throw the glamour of mystery about his name.

A glance into the work of his British interpreter

was calculated to intensify whatever previous interest might have been felt in the philosophy of Hegel. It was not only the unusual vigour and vividness of the style in which the book was written; it was not only the evidence throughout of hard study and hard thought, nor the striking and original illustrations which abounded on every page—what specially impressed, on a first reading of the *Secret*, was the writer's intense *sincerity*, his profound conviction of the supreme value to mankind of the outcome, or, as he would himself have named it, the substance, of Hegelianism. The philosophy of Hegel, he says, "yields at every step the choicest aliment of humanity—such aliment as nourishes us strongly into our true stature." In another passage: "The system of Hegel is this: not a mere theory or intellectual view, or collection of theories or intellectual views, but an *Organon, through which passed, the individual soul finds itself on a new elevation, and with new powers.*" Again: "Hegel . . . seems to have closed an era, and has named the all of things in such terms of thought as will, perhaps, remain essentially the same for the next thousand years."

It is nearly half-a-century since those words were written; but the conviction that they are true still will be felt by every thoughtful, unprejudiced person who, knowing the nature of the intellectual and spiritual wants of the present day, reads for the first time the Preface to the original edition of the *Secret of Hegel*. During the years since its publication, there has hardly been one man, in any part of the world, addicted however little to the higher philosophical thought, who has not, at some time or other, admitted his debt, for enlightenment and stimulus, to the *Secret of Hegel;* nevertheless, there are perhaps many earnest, intelligent souls in the present day who know not that the book contains the very intellectual and spiritual nourishment for

which they are seeking—many who, on reading it for the first time, would feel

> ". . . like some watcher of the skies,
> When a new planet swims into his ken."

Without entering into philosophical technicalities (which are beyond the scope of the present volume), it is hoped that it may be possible to indicate, in terms intelligible to the thoughtful, but uninitiated, reader for whom these pages are specially written, the general nature of the grounds on which Stirling rests the claim to supreme value of the Hegelian philosophy, as well as to prove that those grounds are as strong as ever—that eighty years after the death of Hegel, and nearly half-a-century since his *Secret* was revealed to British readers, it is still, as Stirling himself expressed it, in "the vessel of Hegel" that what he calls the "Historic Pabulum" —*i.e.*, the spiritual nourishment which the wants of any special age demand—is contained. That part of the present undertaking, however, it is thought better to defer to a later chapter; and meantime to trace out the events of the life, and the various stages in the intellectual development, of the author of the "Secret of Hegel."

James Hutchison Stirling was born in Glasgow on the 22nd of June 1820—the youngest of the six children of William Stirling, and Elizabeth Christie, his wife.

The father of the future philosopher was in many ways a remarkable man. Owing chiefly, no doubt, to his characteristic reserve and taciturnity, little was known regarding his early life even to his son; and one feels, on recalling what one has heard of him, as if he had never been anything but the middle-aged man, father of a family, and partner in the firm of James Hutchison & Co., manufacturers, of whom such a vivid impression was preserved in the memory of his son.

Of his (William Stirling's) father, his grandson has often been heard to tell with pride that he fought as a private soldier in the war in Canada in the middle of the eighteenth century, rising to the rank of sergeant. That fact, however, is all that is now known of him. A certain mystery seems to hang around his origin and birthplace; and a believer in heredity might find evidence of old descent on the part of the soldier in the remarkably small, well-shaped hands and feet of some of his descendants. Those of Margaret Stirling, the philosopher's only sister, for instance, were like a sculptor's models —small, perfectly formed, smooth and white as wax. Stirling himself, however, never made any attempt to discover the origin of his family—a thing in which he had no interest.

No doubt a believer in heredity would trace to his soldier grandfather the military look, which distinguished the philosopher throughout life, and was the subject of frequent remark, as well as the fighting instinct which was a marked trait in his character, and the intense interest which he always took in descriptions of battles.

In many respects, William Stirling was fitted by nature to be the father of a man of genius, if it may not be said that he himself possessed, in some degree at least, the gift of genius. No man was ever more blessed, or cursed, with the *praefervidum ingenium* which is supposed to be characteristic of his countrymen. Usually remarkably silent, as has already been indicated, if he were roused by opposition to his will, or by any action on the part of a member of his family of which he disapproved, he would overwhelm the unfortunate offender with a lava stream of burning words. Intellectually, he was certainly a man of remarkable ability. Though we have no record of the steps, it must have been by his own talents that he raised himself to the position of partner in his firm, and amassed a con-

siderable fortune; and we know that it was his energy, his eagle eye for the detection of blemishes in the work of the employees, and the awe which he inspired in those under him, which earned for "Hutchison's muslin" the high reputation for excellence which it enjoyed. There is still extant, too, among his son's papers, a "rule for caming" —a sort of algebraic formula for use in weaving— which is believed to have secured for him his partnership in Hutchison's firm.

His business success, moreover, is not the only evidence we possess of the intellectual ability of William Stirling. We know that he made a special study of algebra and mathematics, and that he was seldom seen out of business hours without a book in his hand. A man to whom the pleasures of the table, of society, of sport, of the pipe and the flowing bowl, were almost unknown, his sole enjoyment was derived from books, with the occasional variety of a game of draughts. Tobacco he looked on with actual abhorrence.

Though mathematics seem to have formed his chief study, he devoted some attention to general literature; but in his literary tastes, unlike his son, he belonged entirely to the past. Pope and Goldsmith were his favourite authors. He never seems to have advanced beyond a liking for the stiff regularity of Pope's verse; he never learned to appreciate the spontaneity, the originality, the wealth of imagery, the variety of rhythm, of a Shelley or a Keats, who were the gods of his son's literary idolatry.

Of his wife, Elizabeth Christie, the mental portrait which survives in living memory is much fainter and dimmer than that of her husband. She was, we know, both as wife and mother, most loving and tender. To the end of his life, her youngest son preserved a warmly affectionate memory of her, and never ceased to regret her

comparatively early death before he had completed his eighth year. Although he was so young when she died, he had the liveliest recollections of her tenderness to him during a childish illness, and of her motherly pride in him — especially on the occasion of some school prize-giving, when he, probably not yet seven years of age, stood up in the Trades' Hall in Glasgow, and recited the speech of Cassius to Brutus in Scene II., Act 1 of Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*—surely a sufficiently remarkable feat for a boy of those years. Eighty years later, he was heard to recite the passage with literal correctness, though, in the long interval, he had never re-learned it.

If it was from his father's family that Stirling inherited his military look and fighting instinct, it was probably to his mother's side of the house that he owed the religious feeling which was deeply implanted in his nature. Among his books are one or two old editions of classic writers, inscribed with the name David Christie, and the date 1793, which belonged to a brother of his mother's, a remarkably good and pious young man, who died while preparing for the ministry of the Scottish Church.

The loss of his mother was of course a serious misfortune to the young Stirling. There was no one to take her place—if anyone ever can take the place of a mother. His sister was five years older than he; but a girl of twelve could not be expected to supply the place of a mother to a younger brother; and the boy, who was naturally warm-hearted, and eager for the affection of those around him, sadly missed the love and tender care of the mother he had lost.

If, however, the loss of his mother robbed the home of its comfort and happiness, and if the reserve and aloofness of his father often chilled him, the boy Stirling was possessed of too much

vitality and vigour to be permanently depressed by anything. Once outside the walls of the uncongenial home, he seems to have thrown the memory of it to the winds, and to have become the life and soul of his young companions, the leader in their sports and frolics. He was gifted by nature with a fine healthy physique, with what the older physiologists called a sanguine temperament, and with the vigour and high spirits which are the natural outcome of such qualities.

Of this period of the life of the future philosopher there are no written records; and the materials for this brief chapter have been drawn almost entirely from the memories of those who were privileged to hear the reminiscent talk in which he occasionally indulged, when surrounded by his family, or by intimate friends. Those talks seem to have turned but little on the subject of school and lessons. We know that Stirling attended "Young's Academy," which was considered, if not educationally, at least socially, superior to the High School; and there is evidence that he attained a certain proficiency in his studies in a copy of *Cæsar*, still among his books, bearing the inscription, "Jacobo Stirling, hoc meriti insignis praemium donavit Ro. Young A.M.," and the date 1833—the year when Stirling left the "Academy." Of what he learned there, however, of the masters who taught him, and the boys whose friendship he made, practically nothing is known.

If there is but little recollection of school, or lessons, or teachers left in the memories of those who have listened to Stirling's talks about the days of his boyhood, they all remember how his eye would light up as he fought over again some of the stone battles in the streets of Glasgow in which he took part as a boy; how he shuddered at the memory of his perilous recovery of a lost arrow by

creeping along the gutter on the roof of a four-storey house; how he would glow as he recalled his swims across the Clyde, and his first ecstatic vision of the limpidly clear water, the rocky shores, and the fairy-like scenery of the Firth of Clyde, which always remained to him throughout life the most beautiful in the world.

There is a little story belonging to this period which shows the remarkable daring, courage, and strength of will which Stirling possessed even as a boy. He was about eight years old when he undertook to guide a boy-companion, a little older than himself, on foot, to Greenock, where the boy had relatives living. The distance between Glasgow and Greenock is over twenty miles; but the self-constituted guide was as ignorant of the distance as he was of the direction! However, he was not the sort of boy to allow a little want of knowledge to prevent his enjoyment of a day's adventure on which he had set his heart; so the two set out in great excitement and high spirits.

No doubt, the sense of adventure and the novelty of the scene carried them very pleasantly over the first few miles; but by-and-by, as they walked on and on, and Greenock did not appear in sight, doubts of his guide's reliability began to assail the elder boy, and he asked anxiously if "Jamie" was quite sure he knew the way. Jamie replied stoutly, if not quite truthfully, that "of course he did"; and on the two tramped for another mile or two. Still Greenock seemed as far away as ever, and the dinner-hour was past! The boys began to feel the pangs of hunger; and the elder boy suggested that they should turn back; but his autocratic guide would not hear of retreat. He had read stories of shipwrecked sailors being driven by the extremities of hunger to eat their own shoes; and he had picked up a piece of leather from the road. This he handed to his companion, bidding him chew it,

and assuring him it would take away all feeling of hunger.

With that faith which children often show in a companion who is stronger and cleverer than themselves, the boy took the unpalatable morsel and munched at it; and the two trudged on again. Still no sight of Greenock; the day was advancing towards evening, and the piece of leather proved but an unsatisfactory substitute for the usual mid-day meal! Jamie's companion began to whimper, and to declare in terror that they were lost; but Jamie himself was quite undaunted, and as determined as ever to reach Greenock, though he was suffering with one of his heels, which became festered, and afterwards gave him much trouble. So on he limped bravely, alluring his dejected companion with assurances that Greenock was "just round the next corner," and the next, and the next, until at last—*mirabile dictu!*—the two adventurous little urchins did actually reach the goal of their hopes, and did actually stumble, as it were, into the arms of the amazed uncle of the elder boy! By him the truants were taken home to his wife, who treated them like a pair of heroes—fed them, and tended them, and put them to bed with a motherly tenderness which was as grateful as it was unaccustomed to the motherless young Stirling.

The boy, it is said, is father of the man. At first sight it may appear as if there were little in common between the profound philosopher and the high-spirited boy, with his ruddy cheeks, fair hair, and bluest of blue eyes; with his love of fun, and fighting, and adventure; but a little consideration will show us that the same qualities which were characteristic of the boy—force, spirit, independence, strength of will, and, perhaps we may add, the love of fighting—were afterwards conspicuous in the pages of the *Secret of Hegel.* Moreover, the boy Stirling was from an early age an omnivorous reader.

A little anecdote which he was often heard to relate would seem to show that, even at nine or ten, the future philosopher had within him that spirit of faith, which, later, he regarded as part of his mission to endeavour to reawaken in the minds of thinkers who were still under the influence of the eighteenth-century sceptical enlightenment. It happened, one evening, that he was very anxious to accompany his brother David, who was some ten years older than himself, to some place of entertainment, and being refused permission, he determined to go without it. So when his brother set out from the house, James slipped out after him, shut the door, took the key with him, and eagerly followed. It was a dark evening, and the boy found it by no means easy to keep in sight the figure of his brother, whose longer strides bore him rapidly through the streets, which were no doubt but dimly lighted in those days of the infancy of gas-illumination. Absorbed in his one object, he forgot everything else, till, suddenly—he knew not how or why—the thought of the house-key flashed into his brain, and he found it was gone! The shock of this alarming discovery brought his steps, and even his heart, as it seemed, to a sudden stop. For a moment or two, he stood paralyzed; then, with the spontaneity of instinct, he turned to the only power that could help—in the agony of his mind, he prayed to God to help him to find the key. Retracing his steps for a few yards, he stooped, and his fingers, groping over the pavement in the dark, closed on something hard and cold. It was the lost key!

How profound was the impression left on the mind of the philosopher by this incident is proved by the fact that he alludes to it in a letter written in 1904—seventy-four years after it took place!—remarking that the experience "acted as focus to what I say of prayer in the *Secret of Hegel*"—

"prayer must be believed, as it were, to stay the arm that sways the universe." It was no doubt present to him, too, when, in 1877, he concluded that strange poem which contains the summary of his philosophy (*I am that I am*) with these lines :—

> "Brute is the world in externality,
> And blind, still stumbling in contingency;
> But I, even I, am Lord: I will control
> The monstrous masses, as they wheel, and check
> Them there, and smooth the pillow for thy head—
> *Make thou thyself but mine—but me—in Prayer.*"

CHAPTER II

1833-1838

Youth—Student Days—Early Love

So the early morning passed — fresh, breezy, healthy—and Stirling's day advanced towards its noon. He was only thirteen when, in October 1833, he may be said to have assumed the *toga virilis*, which in his case took the form of the red cloak worn by students attending Glasgow University. This cloak was regarded by its wearer as somewhat of a boon, not only for the welcome warmth which it afforded on the cold, dark, winter mornings when he sallied forth, breakfastless, to his early class in the dingy, gas-lit lecture-room, but also because it covered a multitude of sins in the way of missing buttons, and worn button-holes, in the apparel of the motherless lad.

Since that day in October 1833 when the young Stirling first took his place on the hard benches of the Latin, or, as it was called, Humanity, class-room, in which Professor William Ramsay then lectured, many changes have taken place in the Scottish Universities. During the last twenty years, the modern spirit has made a most successful invasion of those last strongholds of mediævalism, widening their doors to admit women, opening almost innumerable avenues to academic honours, where previously practically only one existed, giving the student an almost bewildering choice of his course of study, changing the session, which for generations was as fixed as the equinoxes, and, in the case of Glasgow at least, substituting noble

buildings, large, well-ventilated lecture-rooms and spacious corridors for the "quaint, dingy courts" and bare class-rooms in which the students of seventy years ago used to meet. One of the many changes which have taken place is in the age at which students begin their University career. No one nowadays would think of entering the University at such an early age as thirteen; but in 1833 it was quite common to do so, some students matriculating at an even earlier age.

For the next five sessions (which began early in October, and ended always on the first of May), Stirling attended the "Arts" classes, mounting, one by one, the prescribed seven steps which, for generations, had formed the only ladder by which "young ambition" could reach the proud position of Master of Arts. Among his papers there is still a packet of cards, yellow with age, signed by the various professors whose classes he attended, which testify to his regular attendance. On the backs of two of them—those referring to the Junior and Senior Mathematical Classes of the sessions 1834-5, and 1835-6—the professor has written, in his own hand, a testimonial to "Mr Stirling's" "unvarying propriety" of conduct, and to his "excellent capacity for scientific pursuits, accompanied by such a degree of steadiness as are rarely found in one so young." This professor was James Thomson, the father of the celebrated Lord Kelvin, who, along with a brother, attended the senior mathematical class during the same session as Stirling. It is Professor Thomson whom Stirling, in a letter to the Rev. John Snaith (an earnest student of philosophy, with whom, in later years, he carried on a frequent correspondence), describes as "of all my teachers, ablest, perhaps even kindest and gentlest." From the same letter, the following passage is here quoted as referring to the period which we have now reached:—

"The class under Thomson had, towards the end of said session [*i.e.*, the session 1835-6] three evenings of voluntary (or optional) examination for a prize; and for this a dozen or two students may have presented themselves in the class-room benches, of whom I was one. We found the black-board chalked over with problems of the Calculus, or others the like. Our business was, then and there, to write out and present to the professor solutions of them. Two evenings of those examinations I attended, and did the work of. On the evening of the third and last, however, J. Scott of Woolwich, afterwards Principal of Owens College, Manchester—whom we Glasgow students honoured, as religious preacher and philosophical lecturer, not much less than we did Carlyle himself—happened to be on one of his visits to Glasgow, and was advertised to lecture that very night. The temptation proved too great, and to Scott's lecture I went, without difficulty consoling myself that, in said mathematical examination, I had of course no chance, the two sons of the professor, James and William (afterwards Lord Kelvin), being both in the competition. Great was my surprise, however, when, in reference to its result, I heard my own name the first called; and the professor, coming in front of me, said, 'Mr Stirling, you did not attend the examination last night. Now—well, don't speak!—don't speak!' (quite urgently). 'If you were absent from illness, you will get an average—you stand very high.' 'I was absent through choice, sir.' 'Ah, then it is useless! With a little more exertion you might have done—very well!' And that Irish 'very well' was enchantingly (with the pause) characteristic."

This anecdote would seem to prove that, had Stirling chosen to devote himself to Mathematics, he might have become as eminent in that science as he afterwards became in Metaphysics. In after

years, when recalling this episode of his student days, he would sometimes smilingly lament that he had missed an opportunity of distinguishing himself by beating the future Lord Kelvin on his own ground!

If, in the class of Mathematics, he did not gain the first place, it cannot be said, nevertheless, that he failed to achieve distinction; and certificates, written in the year 1842 by Professors Ramsay, Buchanan, and Fleming, show that, in Latin, Logic, and Moral Philosophy, he did good work, and proved himself to be possessed of unusual ability. In Moral Philosophy, indeed, he won the first prize, which, in accordance with the custom which prevailed in the University at that time, was awarded to him by the votes of his fellow-students. It is interesting to note here that we have Stirling's own authority for saying that the honour gained in the Moral Philosophy class by the student of eighteen was not without its influence—even conscious influence—in determining his choice of Philosophy as the subject to which to devote himself. In the Preface to the second edition of the *Secret of Hegel* (published in 1898), referring to the "origin of the book" (*i.e.*, the "Secret"), the author says, with regard to the position which he took in the classes of the University, "if in Classics and Mathematics it could hardly be said that I was *not* distinguished, it was certainly in Philosophy that I was most so; and in that connection I could not but vividly re-collect those, till then academically unheard-of, instantaneous *three* rounds of unrestrainable and *unrestrained* applause that crowned the reading of that essay of mine, and filled the old class-room to the roof with dust—the sweetest that ever in life I did taste, or shall!" Another reference to this his first attempt at philosophical writing occurs on p. 183 of the published edition of Stirling's Gifford Lectures (named "Philosophy and Theology"), where

we also find Stirling's estimate of his Moral Philosophy professor—Dr Fleming. He is there described as "not a man of large culture, either ancient or modern," and as "on the whole, perhaps, not wholly sympathetic" with the literature of the nineteenth century. "*His* literature," Stirling adds, "was Pope and Goldsmith, Hume and Robertson, Samuel Johnson and Dr Hugh Blair; and his philosophy, in the main, that of Reid, Stewart, and Brown, at the same time that his favourite writer of all, perhaps, philosophical or other, was David Hume. Dr Fleming was a very acceptable professor, a man of eloquence, judgment, and taste, and taught well; but, somehow, one did not expect to hear of Anselm at his hands." In short, Professor Fleming, like Stirling's father, seems to have belonged to the past—to the eighteenth century, with its conventional standards of taste, its complacent conviction of the finality of its own judgments; its respect for the Understanding, and for the knowledge of *facts*, if not its contemptuous sneer at *Superstition* — with which name it stigmatized much that later thinkers regard as worthy of reverence.

As regards the other "Arts" professors whose classes Stirling attended, there is no evidence to show what impression they made on his mind. Of his Greek professor, Sir Daniel Sandford, little more than the name seems to have survived in his memory; of his Logic professor (Robert Buchanan) there was preserved, in addition, the recollection of his nickname, "Logic Bob"—this is all, at least, that those who, in after years, listened to the philosopher's talks of his college days can remember of either.

When one recalls those talks, it is surprising how few names one can remember of the young men who sat side by side with Stirling on the hard wooden benches of the dingy class-rooms, and who

raised that dust in the Moral Philosophy class-room which smelt so sweet in his young nostrils. One fellow-student in the Junior Latin class, we know, was Alexander Campbell Fraser, who, in later years, became the chief exponent of the philosophy of Berkeley, as Stirling of the profounder system of Hegel; but the two lads do not seem to have made each other's acquaintance, though they met at a later period in their lives. In his *Biographia Philosophica* (published in 1904) Professor Campbell Fraser casts a backward glance on the old University of Glasgow "in that far-off winter," and on the "dark winter mornings, as we gathered soon after seven to the sound of the college bell."

Lord Kelvin and his brother, James Thomson, have already been mentioned as fellow-students of Stirling's—at least in the class of Mathematics—but the college-chum whose name somehow rises most familiarly in one's memory is a certain "Hutchison," to whom Stirling seems to have been drawn by a common interest in dramatic recitation. Hutchison was possessed of a remarkable voice, and of unusual histrionic gifts, though he required the superior intellectual insight of his friend Stirling to interpret a part for him before he could grasp its significance. The two lads were in the habit, in their leisure hours, of reciting together Shakespeare's *Othello*, Stirling taking the part of Iago, and Hutchison of Othello; and Stirling was so much impressed with the power shown in his friend's impersonation of the Moor of Venice that he urged him to try to find an opening to go on the stage. Hutchison was so far influenced by Stirling's advice as to go up to London, carrying with him a letter to the great actor Macready. Macready, thinking no doubt that this was only another of the stage-struck young fools, many of whom he must have encountered, handed Hutchison over to his manager, with directions to see if he could do anything. The manager received the

young Scotsman at the theatre (Covent Garden?), and asked him what he could do. Othello? Good! They would just go through the chief scene between Othello and Iago, the manager reading the part of Iago. And, leading the way to the stage—no doubt, with the object of overawing the young aspirant to stage honours—the manager had the curtain run up on the bare, empty house. As the scene proceeded to the crisis, however, and Hutchison gave rein to the force and fire within him, and his magnificent voice awoke startling echoes in the vast empty space, it was the other who was startled and overawed. Recoiling before the advance of this overwhelming Othello, he exclaimed, in admiring wonder, "Terrible energy, sir!—terrible energy! Voice!—Ten times the voice of Kemble!"

This must have been highly gratifying to the young Scot; but, alas, this was not all! Energy—even "terrible energy"—and a voice ten times more powerful than Kemble's were not, it seemed, enough to make a successful actor! There must be dancing-lessons, and fencing-lessons, and boxing-lessons, and no doubt much else. Discouraged and disheartened, Hutchison stole back to Scotland—probably by the first available means—and never made another attempt to fulfil what his friend regarded as his vocation.

Many times in later years, Stirling has been heard to tell this little anecdote, describing the scene in the theatre with dramatic effect, and ending always with an impatient exclamation, and a characteristic shrug of the shoulders, condemnatory of this one more instance of a missed opportunity. On the stage, as Stirling thought, Hutchison was bound to have risen to eminence; in the ministry of the United Presbyterian Church, which he adopted as his calling, he never seems to have gained any particular distinction, living and dying

in comfortable obscurity as the U.P. minister of Greenock.

Perhaps, what has been said in the foregoing pages may have given some idea of the way in which Stirling passed through his five sessions in the "Arts" classes—from October 1833 to the first of May 1838. But the sessions only lasted seven months; from May to October, there were five consecutive months when professors and students were free to find for themselves other occupations and pursuits than those of the winter. Often in those days, the summer and winter of a Scottish University student offered a startling contrast, the summer being occupied with the labour of the fields, the winter with books and lectures. In the case of the young Stirling, the contrast was not by any means so marked; even in summer, books must have occupied the greater part of his day, though not, probably, the books used in the University classes. In a letter written in 1842, to which reference will be made later, he describes his private reading as "a chaotic *olla podrida*," consisting of—"Astronomy, chemistry, geology and mathematics, physic, physics, and metaphysics, history and poetry, voyages and travels, with thousands of tales, novels, and romances." The acquisition of this "*olla podrida*" must no doubt have occupied a great part of the long summer days; then there were walks, and walking expeditions with some chosen companions, swims and boating excursions on the beloved Firth of Clyde, occasional fervid talks with a congenial spirit or two, and the "long, long dreams of youth" to fill the long, mysterious gloaming of the Scottish summer.

In the "Foreign Country at Home," published in *Leigh Hunt's Journal* in 1851, there occurs a passage in which Stirling recalls an incident of a summer-time in his student days. The passage is so *real* and vivid—so full of fresh air and sunshine,

and the high spirits and good fellowship of youth—that it has been decided to quote it here in full. It will probably serve to make the young Stirling known to the reader better than any amount of description. The author, in the passage in question, is narrating what he calls a "Welsh experience" before he ever set foot in Wales (where he afterwards spent some eight years of his life).

This experience, he tells us, occurred "when I, a genial youth, hight the Clerk of Copemanhurst, with three other genial but older youths, hight respectively, Locksley, Athelstane, and the Black Knight, students all, strode it all the long summer days gallantly up and down a certain lovely and delightful watering-place. All objects had interest for us in those days, and one of those we met oftenest and enjoyed the most was a tallow-faced, full-figured, middle-aged woman, clad in rather plain and common habiliments, and seated in a green-painted wooden box on three wheels, the moving power of which box was a slender, commonplace-looking man of from thirty to thirty-five. There seemed some command in the dark angles of the cheeks of the lady, and some resignation in the bland jaws of her gentleman hackney. This appearance was too picturesque to escape our attention. Locksley told us—*us*, Athelstane, the Black Knight, and the Clerk of Copemanhurst—that the dame in the chariot, finding herself possessed of a small independency, incapable of self-transport, and insecure of her donkey, had adventurously advertised herself and her substance in the newspapers, with the view of procuring, in the person of a husband, a substitute for the distrusted animal. The present motive power of the chariot, Locksley continued, had eagerly responded, and after due inspection been happily accepted. He had turned out . . . a somewhat creditable husband to fall from an advertisement, and—*quiet in harness* [!] He did at times, when he chanced to have a copper in his pocket, suddenly vanish from his charge, but only to reappear with a blander smile, and a more deferential stoop than ever. The close of the information was that he was a Welshman.

"'Humph! a Welshman!' said the Black Knight. 'Eh! a Welshman, is he?' said Athelstane. 'A Welshman!' said the Clerk. And all four, having thus disburthened

themselves, looked for a moment questioningly into each other's faces, till Athelstane burst out with a loud guffaw, and the memorable distich,—

'Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief,' etc.

All of us, you may guess, joined heartily in guffaw and distich, for we all felt that the former was at our own ignorance, and that the latter contained the sum total of the knowledge of the whole of us—Clerk, Athelstane, Black Knight, and Locksley—in regard to Wales and the Welsh.

"During that summer, then, 'There's Taffy!' 'Here comes Taffy!' were among the pleasantest events of the day. I recollect we encountered the lady and the chariot on one of those occasions when Taffy, having happened to possess a specimen of copper in his pocket, had gone to deposit the same, leaving his charge in the very middle of the highway. The countenance of the lady looked black! Her hands were folded on her chest, and her lips were screwed expressively together. She seemed anything but comfortable, and was rapidly becoming less so under the approach of a large herd of ill-behaved cattle. The Black Knight, however, stood chivalrously to the rescue, gallantly supported by the bold outlaw, while Athelstane, with unusual vigour, blew out his well-speckled cheeks into an alarming 'Shoo!' meant for the cattle; and even the Clerk showed himself not unsympathetic. We had the pleasure to witness presently the quiet return of the bland Taffy, who only wiped his mouth and smiled. The lady said nothing; and the chariot moved on, leaving Knight, Clerk, Athelstane, and Locksley looking for a considerable time delightedly after them."

It is unfortunate that it is not possible at this date to identify the four "genial youths" of this passage. The "Clerk" has revealed his own identity; "Locksley" was probably a fellow-student named Lindsay; and "Athelstane" no doubt the Hutchison of whose histrionic gifts something has been already seen. As for the Black Knight, we fear he must remain incognito. The "lovely and delightful watering-place," where the said genial youths "strode it all the long summer days," is possibly

Helensburgh, on the Firth of Clyde, where the Stirling family usually spent part of the summer vacations.

It was no doubt this period of his own life that Stirling had in his mind when he wrote the introduction to the *Ballad of Merla*, which, together with other *Saved Leaves*, was published along with *Burns in Drama* in 1878. This introduction is so interesting, both for its literary quality, and for the vivid description which it gives of the inner life of youthful genius, that no apology appears to be due for quoting here the following passage from it :—

"I suppose life, if it is ever life, is emphatically so to the hobbledehoy who is literary and a student. He, surely, *formaliter* and *eminenter*—to speak like Descartes—lives. *Now* only it is that there is for him nature. The veil is lifted from the universe, and he sees it before him golden. He climbs the mountain, and has rapture in its breath. He rushes to the sea, and wrapt in its vast monologue, wanders delirious. Lake and river, rocks and trees and flowers, fountains that bubble up, the sun, the moon, the stars, clouds and the firmament of blue—he sees them all for the first time : there is a glamour in the very grass. Now it is, too, that his eyes fall upon the maidens ; and they are all beautiful—white-browed, vermeil-cheeked, golden-haired goddesses. Nay, the very men are caught up into the new glory : so strong they seem—well-built, firm-knit, and manly—so assured and self-possessed ! And books—poets ! How he glows as he reads them—how he treads as on billows of bliss when alone with them—how he raves with kindled eyes to his fellows of them !"

It was no doubt in some such glorified universe as that described here that the youth Stirling dwelt to the close, perhaps, of his eighteenth year. Nature, books, friendship, were his, and all looked ethereal in the glamour of the mysterious golden atmosphere which the poetic temperament, in early days, sheds on everything it beholds. It was during this period, too, that his eyes fell upon—not "the maidens," but *the* maiden—and he found her beautiful. The date

of their first meeting is not now known; but it must have been some time before his eighteenth year that Stirling met the one and only love of his life—the "Geenemer" of his verses, his loving partner for more than fifty years.

One of the agents of the firm of James Hutchison & Co., of which Stirling's father became partner, was a certain William Orr, who lived in the small town of Irvine in Ayrshire. For some reason or other not now known—perhaps for change of air after an illness—Stirling, while still in his early teens, was sent to Irvine on a visit to Orr and his family. To the motherless son of that cloud-wrapt, awful Jove in Glasgow, whose hand held the sleeping thunder-bolts, the family affection which existed in the Orr household, the mutual sympathy and confidence between parents and children, must have been both surprising and delightful to witness. To the end of his life, Stirling preserved a grateful memory of his visits to the Orr family (for the first visit was repeated several times in the following years).

It was on the occasion of one of those visits that Stirling met his future wife—Jane Hunter Mair. Her father, William Mair, who belonged to a family of "lairds," the Mairs of Galston, was not successful in life—largely owing, no doubt, to faults in his own character. He had made a runaway marriage with an orphan girl of fifteen, who was still at a boarding-school; and when he died, still a young man, he left her with but slender means, and a family of young children to bring up. Jane, who was the youngest, was adopted by a childless aunt and uncle-in-law, Mr and Mrs Hunter, whom she grew up to regard with the affection of a child for its parents.

The Hunters lived in Irvine; and it was there that the early life of the future wife of the philosopher was passed—it was there that she grew into a girl of unusual beauty and charm. Of a good height, and well-formed, with crinkly golden hair, a face of

a milk-white pallor (which neither suggested, nor indicated, ill-health), and straight regular features, Jane, or as she was usually called, Jeannie, Mair must have owed her chief charm to the piquant contrast between the statuesque outer mask and the warm, vivacious soul which informed it. A man might have thrown an admiring look at the beautiful statue, and passed on; but there was a roguish light in the grey eyes that *challenged*; there was a sweetness in the upward curve of the smiling lips that *melted*—he could not pass! And so he stayed, and was lost. One can well imagine the effect of such a vision as this on the fervid young poet-soul! (For it was the poet, rather than the philosopher, who was awake at that time in Stirling's mind.) And it was not only to the eye that "Geenemer" (Stirling's fanciful contraction of Jeannie Mair) made her appeal. She possessed a voice of unusual power and beauty; and she infused such feeling and expression into her singing as made it something to remember; for she had the temperament of the artist, and the heart of the true woman. Vivacious, sensitive, perhaps quick-tempered, and above all, loving and sympathetic, she alternated, with unconscious art, between espièglerie and tenderness, never allowing her lover to be cloyed with too much sweetness, or chilled with too much reserve.

As will readily be understood, Stirling was very far from being the only man who succumbed to the remarkable attractions of Miss Mair. With a magnanimity which the favoured swain does not always display, he published many years later, among his own early writings, some verses addressed to her by an unsuccessful rival, which, as the following stanza will show, possessed real poetic merit:—

> "Love peeps amid those tresses fair
> That circle round that brow of white,
> Like wavy clouds that wait the moon
> In the still night."

Of the verses which he himself addressed to his future wife, Stirling preserved only those entitled "Geenemer" (published among his other *Saved Leaves* in 1878), which belong to a later period than that which we have here reached, having been written in 1846. In *Ogrebabe, the Body-snatcher*, however—a somewhat gruesome tale of the dissecting-room, which forms part of the contents of the volume of 1878, and must have been written about 1838 or 1839—there occur passages in which, under a thin disguise, we can recognize the scenes, and perhaps some of the incidents, of his young romance. The "Erfine" of the story is seen at once to be Irvine; and the scene, through which "Ogrebabe" and his companions are described as passing on that stormy night, is one with which the author had become familiar on the occasions "when, with his feet, he had vanquished the barriers of space between him and *her*"—when, starting at dawn, or before it, he had tramped the six-and-twenty miles that lay between Glasgow and Irvine, to be met at the garden-gate with smiles of welcome by his "Geenemer"! "Oh, the exultation with which he had trod that footpath—the blow of triumph which, once in other days, his stick had inflicted, till it rang again, on that iron gate, when, with his feet, he had vanquished the barriers of space between him and *her!* Her? Ah, was not that the very bank whereon he had sat with her? Was it not on that very spot that that so pleasant word had fallen—that that so innocent, betraying little look had escaped?"

To those who have heard, from the lips of the chief actor, the description of those walks from the lamp-lit streets of Glasgow, through "dark, tortuous suburbs," between "hedges dimly seen," "past garden-walls, and mansion-gates, and low cottages," to Irvine bathed in morning sunshine, and the iron gate, where *she* stood awaiting him—to them the

picture is so real and living that it appears fadeless. The two lovers, like those in Keats' immortal Ode, seem to be fixed there for ever, in their frame of golden sunshine, she standing by the gate, with the glow on her white face, the light in her eye, and the tender smile on her lips, he striding towards her, his face "aflame with joy and eager expectation," his limbs "firm with the triumph of a weary thirty miles conquered beneath them."

"For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair."

CHAPTER III

1838—1843

Choice of a Profession—The Eglinton Tournament—First Literary Efforts—Correspondence with Carlyle

It is about the period now reached—at the close of Stirling's eighteenth year—that the first break seems to occur in his life. The fresh dawn of childhood had glided smoothly into the sunny morning of early youth; but at noon a cloud seems to have darkened the sky of the future philosopher. What was the nature of the cloud is perhaps sufficiently indicated in the letter of 1842 to which reference has already been made. The literary hobbledehoy, who had been living in the enchanted world described in the quotation in the last chapter, found himself suddenly confronted with one of the stern realities of life—found himself, as he put it, "compelled by some circumstances, and induced by others," to "come to some conclusion as to what method I should win my bread by, and, that determined, to accomplish it as soon as possible."

It is easy to surmise that the circumstances which "compelled" were connected with Stirling's father, while those which "induced" were concerned with his love. Alas, that even the enchanted portals of romance should give entrance into the noisy market-place, with its vulgar struggle for bread!

After some reflection, Stirling decided to adopt medicine as his "bread-and-butter science"—not, as it appears, because he felt any special vocation for the profession, but because, of the professions open to him, he thought there was most to be said

in its favour. It was a "manly trade—soon acquired—giving bodily health and exercise, with wholesome variety, in its pursuit—power of attending to my own health, and to that of those around me—opportunities of seeing, and ministering to, human nature . . . and, lastly, want of time for literary pursuits was hardly to be a fear. To these general arguments were added others of a special nature : so medicine *was* the trade I chose."

So, in the beginning of November 1838, the future philosopher became a student of Medicine, enrolling himself in the classes of Anatomy and Chemistry, and taking out a ticket for the dissecting-room. It is to this period that belongs *Ogrebabe*, the story referred to in last chapter, with its realistic glimpse of the dissecting-room and its occupants—living and otherwise!—in the early years of the nineteenth century.

It was during the summer following his admission to the medical classes (in August 1839) that Stirling had the good fortune to be present at a remarkable scene, which left a lively impression on his imagination. Few people now living have probably heard of the Eglinton Tournament—an attempt made by the then Earl of Eglinton to restore, for a couple of days, the splendour of the jousts and tilting and combats in armour of the old days of chivalry—but at the time it occurred the event caused great interest and excitement. The tournament took place in a large meadow near Irvine, where, as has been said, Stirling's future wife lived ; and she has often been heard to tell of the bustle and agitation into which the little town was thrown by being made the scene of the most remarkable spectacle of the time. For months beforehand, applications were received from would-be spectators by every inn for miles around, and almost by every inhabitant of the town ; and when the eve of the great day arrived, even the floors

of the "best parlours" of Irvine could not afford sufficient sleeping-places for the enormous crowds that had assembled, from every part of the country, to witness the pageant; and many found beds in covered vehicles, and in boats on the beach!

All the plans and arrangements had been carried out with the most faithful regard for historical accuracy in even minute details. It was a real tournament that the spectators were to witness —such as Ivanhoe or Bois-Guilbert might have taken part in, with lists, and armour, and heralds, and knights, and even a Queen of Beauty, as in the old days. It was not likely that young Stirling, for whom the knightly and chivalrous had always a powerful fascination, would miss the opportunity of being present on such an interesting occasion. Among his papers there is still a faded blue card, bearing, in the centre, the figure of a knight in full armour on a mailed horse, riding full tilt, lance in rest, and, above and below the figure, the words, "Eglinton Tournament," and "XXVIII and XXIX August, MDCCCXXXIX."

But, alas, men—even earls!—may propose, but the weather disposes. When, on the great day, in spite of rain, and sodden ground, crowds assembled at the scene of the pageant, it was only to be told that, in consequence of the state of the weather, the tournament would not take place that day. On the following day the programme of jousts and tilting—or such portion of it as was possible under existing conditions—was carried out; but the disadvantages of wet and slippery ground interfered seriously with the display of feats of arms and horsemanship, for which those who took part in it had been so long preparing.

We have mentioned above the story of *Ogre-babe;* but it must not be supposed that it was its author's first attempt at literary composition. It was not even the first which he preserved and

printed. Like those of all genuinely literary people —like those of the human race in general—Stirling's first attempts at writing were in verse. Perhaps the earliest of his literary compositions which he preserved was the *Ballad of Merla*, "sketched, and in a manner finished," as he says himself, "in the summer of '37," though touched up and added to some four years later. To the same period (1837) belongs *The Tale of Aihai*, which, though written in prose, is poetic in conception and language.

Of those two early writings, the latter is not only intrinsically superior to the other, both for completeness and originality, but also, to a biographer, more interesting, as it seems to give a glimpse into the inner life of its writer, while *Merla* is, from its very nature, impersonal. The little prose tale is, in fact, the reflection of that mood of dejection and self-depreciation to which the poetic temperament is at times peculiarly liable, and it furnishes evidence that, even in that enchanted period of youth described in the introduction to *Merla*, Stirling was not altogether without his moments of "divine discontent" and morbid self-consciousness. Aihai (Greek *αἰαῖ*), the son of Wosmi (Woe's me), a lad "eager in his soul, and like unto a flame in thinking," is yet discontented with his slight stature, and shrinks from his fellows in bitter self-consciousness. One evening, as he sat apart "on a green slope that took the champaign in," lonely and dejected, he prayed that the Father might remove the reproach of his dwarfish stature, and make him of the height of other men; and in the morning, when he awoke, he found he had grown! And "all day long, he strode about the streets, exulting; he overlooked this thing, and he measured himself by that. He followed his shadow in the sun; and he delighted himself by the water-course." But when evening came, the mood of discontent returned—his height

was not yet sufficient. "He grew bitter as of old, and cursed himself." Again that night, he "waxed in his sleep"; and again evening brought back his bitterness and discontent. So it went on, each morning bringing joy in the discovery that he had grown in the night, each evening renewing his discontent that his stature was not greater.

At length, after many adventures and vicissitudes, when he had grown to gigantic proportions, the King of the country sent for him, and made him a guard before the gate of the palace. At first people flocked to see him; but after a while they began to murmur and complain, because it cost so much to feed and clothe his huge body that they came near to starve.

"Then Aihai saw their thoughts; and he arose in bitterness. . . . And he went forth. A mighty shape, he trod the impenetrable forests, and they crashed before him. . . . He whooped to the eagle; he raced with the wild horse. He chased the elephant in wantonness; and sprang upon him with a shout, and weighed him to the ground; and the huge bulk stumbled powerless. . . . And the sun at length *stooped to the forest, and threw his red eye through the trees.* . . . And Aihai stood up; and lo, he was taller than the tallest of the forest brood; their green heads lay beneath him like a sea. . . . But still with tenfold speed he felt his huge frame grow and grow, uprushing to the heavens. *In mid-air he met the lark*, that dropped in terror. And the eagle rested on his head, nor knew that there was life in him. . . . Then rushed the mighty bulk like tempest over earth, and leaped into the main. In vain! *Great ocean like a rivulet but wets his feet.* . . . He falls!—'Ha! 'Tis but a dream!'

"On the green slope . . . the youth was sitting; and night was over him, and the unfathomable stars. And he arose; and behold! as he stood up the veil was lifted; and *he saw the whole huge universe lying in the hollow of God's hand.*"

Even from this brief extract, it is surely easy to see that this is a most remarkable production for

a lad of seventeen—remarkable for its originality of conception, its beauty of language and imagery, and above all, for its *maturity*, both in form, and in the underlying thought. When, more than forty years after it was written, the tale was published in the volume of 1878 already referred to, a poet,[1] who admired, above almost every other writer of the time, Victor Hugo, did not hesitate to say that *Aihai* was "sublimer" than the work of the Frenchman, nor even to draw a parallel between it and the *Prometheus* of Æschylus.

The *Ballad of Merla* is more fragmentary and unequal than *Aihai*, and contains more traces of youthfulness; but there are verses here and there—there are images scattered throughout—which prove the possession on the author's part of original poetic faculty of even a high order. Take, for instance, the invocation to the "Muse of the Ballad-chant," with which the poem opens. The tone we hear there is not the thin note of the versifier's cheap pipe; it has something of the mellowness of the flute of Keats himself. Then, surely, the following verses, descriptive of an autumn morning, are no mere echo of previous writers, but exhibit the freshness of one who *looks* and *names* for himself:—

"Autumnal morn! Within the fog,
The path shows white across the lea,
The hoar-frost furs the fallen log,
Breathes on the stile, and silvers every tree.

The sun, sole alchemist, transmutes
To gold the silver of the dawn;
The smitten pathway swiftly shoots,
Kindling and blackening, o'er the smoking lawn.

Eastward, the illuminated mist,
That drinks the glory of the sun,
Is loud with quick-voiced, eagerest
Lark, whose new joy is never to be done."

Belshazzar's Feast, a comparatively short poem,

[1] The Hon. Roden Noel, author of "Beatrice," "The Red Flag," "A Little Child's Monument," and several other poems.

which belongs partly to the following year (1838), though touched up some three years later, shows a marked advance on *Merla*, in completeness, in originality of measure and rhythm, and in maturity. The little poem, with its vivid suggestion of tumultuous movement, passion, life; of splendour, and pomp and pride—all brought to a sudden check by "horror's awful thrill"—is not unworthy to be the work of even the best of our poets. It does not lend itself well to quotation—it ought to be read as a whole—but perhaps the following lines from the opening of the poem will serve to give some impression of the bounding, dance-like rhythm of the first part of it, the latter part being written in blank verse.

> "Belshazzar, the king, makes a feast to-night.
> The windows are flashing their floods of light
> On the dazzled eye
> Of the passer-by,
> Who pauses a moment to list to the sound
> Of music, and mirth, and jollity.
> How the casements shake to the dancers' bound,
> And the roof laughs out in joy and glee!"

These extracts from Stirling's early writings are given here without apology. True, they have been published elsewhere; but there are many readers familiar with Stirling's philosophical works to whom the first-fruits of his genius are quite unknown; and they deserve to be known. In these days no writer is allowed to be able to excel in two departments of literature. If a writer enjoys a reputation as a philosopher, no one will credit him with the possession of poetic faculty; yet it is often the poet of nineteen who becomes the most profound philosopher at fifty. Imagination develops earlier than the faculty of abstract thought, and the possession of a vigorous imagination in youth gives the best promise of a power of profound thinking in mature years. There is no better criterion of intellect than the power to form original metaphors, original images;

and this power constitutes the very essence of *poetic* faculty. "Nothing," says Emerson, "so marks a man as imaginative expressions. . . . Genius thus makes the transfer from one part of Nature to a remote part, and betrays the rhymes and echoes that pole makes with pole. . . . A happy symbol is a sort of evidence that your thought is just. . . . Thus a good symbol is the best argument, and is a missionary to persuade thousands."

In the preface to the original edition of the *Secret* Stirling touches on this subject, in speaking of the Hegelian distinction between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff—i.e.* between "a symbol, a metaphor, as it were, *an externalization of thought*" and a pure notion—"thought *proper*." He condemns, as unphilosophical, and unsuitable for a student of Hegel, the habit of *thinking in pictures*—of making use of "*Vorstellung*, figurate conception, imagination, *in lieu of thought*." At the same time, he goes on to say :—

"We must bear in mind, on the other hand, that Vorstellungen are always the beginning, and constitute the express conditions, of thought. We are not to remain by them, nevertheless, as what is ultimate. . . . The concrete Vorstellung is the preliminary condition, but it must be purified into the abstract Begriff, else we never attain to mastery over ourselves, but float about a helpless prey to our own pictures. . . . So much, indeed, is Vorstellung the condition of the Begriff, *that we should attribute Hegel's success in the latter to his immense power in the former.* No man had ever clearer, firmer Vorstellungen than he; but he had the mastery over them—he made them at will tenaciously remain before him, or equally tenaciously draw themselves the one after the other. Vorstellung, in fact, is for the most part *the key to mental power;* and if you know a man's Vorstellungen, you know himself. If, on the one side, then, the habit of Vorstellungen, and previous formation of Vorstellungen without attempt to reduce them to Begriffe, constitutes the greatest obstacle to the understanding of Hegel, *power of Vorstellung* is, on the other

side, *absolutely necessary to this understanding itself.* So it is that, of all our literary men, we are accustomed to think of Shelley and Keats as *those the best adapted by nature for the understanding of a Hegel.* These young men had a real power of Vorstellung; and their Vorstellungen were not mere crass, external pictures, but *fine images analytic and expressive of thought.* . . . There is a distinction, then, between *those who move in Vorstellungen wholly as such*, and *those who use them as living bodies with a soul of thought consciously within them;* and the classes separated by this distinction will be differently placed as regards Hegel: while the former, in all probability, will never get near him, the latter, on the other hand, will possess the power to succeed."

The italics in the above passage, it may be mentioned in passing, do not belong to the original text; they have been employed to emphasize the passages which support the assertion, made above, that "the poet of nineteen often becomes the most profound philosopher at fifty." One of the objects of this memoir is to trace the intellectual development of the subject of it. The extracts from his early writings are given to prove that he possessed what he called himself "a real power of Vorstellung," which is "the key to mental power."

Meantime, while his leisure hours were given to the writing and polishing of his "Merlas" and "Belshazzars," the chief part of Stirling's day was occupied with the study of medicine. Though at a later period he threw himself heartily into his profession, and to the end of his life prided himself on his knowledge of, and skill in, medicine, at the time which we have here reached he does not seem to have found the study of medicine wholly to his liking. "The minuteness of detail with which it was to be studied," he writes in 1842, "was irksome. Besides, literature was to be banished; medicine had taken its place. . . . I was afraid of medicine strangling literature; and again, and with better reason, of literature strangling medicine."

Indeed, it was hardly to be expected that the youth, with his poetic and literary aspirations, should find the atmosphere of the dissecting-room and the operating-theatre entirely congenial. He longed, as others like himself have longed and will long, to be able to devote himself wholly to literature. It was this longing which, in 1840, induced him to write to Thomas Carlyle, who, after years of obscurity, had become famous, some three years earlier, by the publication, in 1837, of his *French Revolution*. Like all young men of literary leanings at that time, Stirling had been deeply impressed by the new force, the original personality revealed in the pages of *Sartor* and the *French Revolution*. No writer hitherto, unless we except Shelley and Keats, had exerted so profound an influence on him. As he himself stated in a letter to Carlyle, the acquaintance with the latter's works was, at that period of his life, "the most important element in my being." Forty-six years later, too, we find him[1] paying the following tribute to the extraordinary influence wielded by Carlyle:—

"Carlyle lived when Dickens and Thackeray, when Tennyson and Browning, lived, but there can be no doubt that of them all it was he that excited the intensest and most general interest. He was every literary young man's idol, almost the god he prayed to. Even a morsel of white paper with the name of Carlyle upon it would have been picked up from the street as a veritable amulet. No wonder that every such young man—and there were hundreds the like—brought himself, through person or through letter, into presence of the god; for it is questionable if even Voltaire attracted to himself, on the part of literary men, such an enormous mass of correspondence as, very plainly, Carlyle did."

Considering how overwhelming was the attraction which Carlyle exerted over all the ardent young minds of the day, it would have been

[1] In *Thomas Carlyle's Counsels*. Edinburgh: James Thin.

strange indeed if Stirling, with his literary longings, and literary enthusiasm, had escaped its influence.

Stirling's first letter to Carlyle, dated 11th May 1840, while it gives evidence of literary power, is undoubtedly the letter of a very young man. His object in writing is, as he says himself, "to submit to you a scheme to secure to literary men meat and drink, fire, clothes, and lodging." The scheme is the formation of an association of men interested in the promotion of literature—what the writer calls a *Letter-League*—who are to gather together, by subscriptions and other means suggested, a sum of £1000 to be offered as a prize for the best work on some subject proposed by them. No fewer than *nine* rules are laid down by which the association would be made "capable of continuing itself, and of increasing its resources"; and the letter ends with an enthusiastic reference to the advantages to literature to be derived from such an association.

"What a new power would not literary men thus come to have by aggregation! What a power in directing the tastes of the community by the subjects they might propose! Might they not in process of time grow into a constituent part of the body politic?"

This letter, along with the entire correspondence with Carlyle to which it gave rise, was, some two years later, copied out by the writer's hand "for Jeannie" (his future wife); and to the copy this note is appended:—

"At this time [May 1840] Carlyle was lecturing on Hero-worship; and I flatter myself I find in the introduction to his lecture on the literary man, delivered two or three days after receipt of my letter, evidence that his mind was somewhat led to comment on this subject of the organization of literary men even by poor me. So true is it that no man's word dies!"

Carlyle's reply to his young and unknown correspondent is the letter of the mature literary man of forty-five he then was. He puts his finger at once on what is undoubtedly the weakest point in the proposed *Letter-League*.

"5 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA,
20th May 1840.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have read your letter, and shown it to another literary man, a person of sound practical habits and judgment, who, lamenting along with you the evil as it at present stands, agrees with me that your proposed plan is entirely inexecutable. No society could be formed here or elsewhere that I know, on such a principle; and if there were one formed, the *fallibility* of its decisions would too certainly dissolve it again,—for its decisions, only some degrees better than those of the huge gross public, could not hope to be *in*fallible; and, unlike those of the public, they would not be reversible, capable of rectifying themselves in the long run. What is to be got from societies of that kind, in the present epoch of the world, may be seen from many instances: Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, to go no further; let us look at that, and despair of societies at present. 'Societies' in fact are a kind of *machines* for doing what is not mechanical, what cannot be done by machinery at all; windmills laboriously built up to grind—let us say sunbeams, or some other entirely ungrindable substance; they do not accordingly grind it; they produce nothing but fuss, dinner-oratory, newspaper-puffery, under various figures—*wind*.

"For yourself, my dear sir, if you are, as I suppose likely, a young literary man struggling towards the accomplishment of something good and manful, I will bid you in brief *accomplish it*, and lay it down silently in this all-embracing Universe,

with the sure faith that if it *is* good, the Universe will not reject but will accept it. Neither are the difficulties one strives under useless, wholly obstructive; very far from that; they have their most precious indispensable uses, and have furthered us while seeming only to obstruct: believe that you will find it so one day. Poverty itself, whatever the grossness of the world may think of it, is by no manner of means a very great or the chief evil a man has to struggle under; nay, in these days, if you gave me a true man to breed up, with the heart of a man in him, I should say rather, *Let* him be poor! This I believe to be decidedly true.—Courage!—With many good wishes and hopes, yours very truly, T. CARLYLE."

Stirling's letter in reply to the above, it has been decided to give here in full, because it is the only one of his letters in his early correspondence with Carlyle which escaped its writer's disapproval in later years as "young" and "foolish." It seems to show the writer's readiness and quickness to *learn*—to prove his possession of the sort of mind into which a seed of thought dropped develops into a great tree.

"GLASGOW,
May 26/40.

"SIR,—I know not whether it is meet for me to write again; I fear that this second intrusion will wear the appearance of a threat to dun you: but were I not to express my sense of the kind and noble manner in which you have written to me, I feel that a sort of fretting, unsatisfied sensation of something not completed would remain with me.

"It will not appear wonderful perhaps that my notion of the scheme about which I wrote to you is now changed. A person might indeed, once

or twice, contrive to make money by it, I conceive; but *I* shall not. I had some vague indistinct glimpses of some of the things which you have stated, but was too full of the bigness of the good which I had conjured up to be able to fix and anatomize them. Reflecting in the train into which your letter took me, I had little difficulty in perceiving that the contrivance which is to grind sunbeams must be of their own nature; that the machinery which is to influence thought and spirit must be of thought and spirit; and that a Letter-League, becoming a monopoly, would become also a Letter-despotism and a nuisance. I remembered that it had been said, 'That a great original writer must, in some measure, create the taste by which he is to be enjoyed,' and by a greater, 'That everything of the highest excellence that comes forth, everything most worthy of remark that occurs, is, so long as it is barely possible, denied.' I remembered those sayings, and, in their truth, *saw that the prizes of such Letter-League would be bestowed only on imitative men, men in test of whom it had existing formulas to apply;* would be bestowed not on sowers, but on gatherers and binders, not on makers but on clippers, raspers, joiners, polishers. By the light of your words, sir, I was able to remember and see these things.

"It is impossible for me to express the enthusiasm, firmness, energy, and hope which the words you addressed specially to myself infused into me. My whole being seemed to expand; the shackles of matter seemed fallen: — the emotion passed; I looked into my mind, and sought for the suitableness of such words being addressed to me, and found indeed that there was nothing *done*, that all was to *be accomplished.* I rest satisfied, sir, that in your writings it is, and in those of the great men to whom your judgment points as being teachers, that I am to find that breath and spirit which is to clear

the channels for the outpassing of aught of good or manful which may be in me; and if none such there be, I content myself with the hope that, by lying in their radiancy, I shall be able to drink in their lustre, as a lily-cup the sun, and that thus, steeped in brightness, interpenetrated with light, I shall be able to spread and diffuse it where otherwise it might not come. This is no small object; and to attain this, or higher, it is not the least spur to energy and action that, by such attainment, I shall perhaps reach such station as shall make possible even intercourse with you. Deeply grateful for the words you have addressed to me, for the kind and truly great manner in which you have met my boyish proposal, I take my leave of you, sir, and am, etc."

The copy ends abruptly without signature. If it will readily be allowed that there is a certain flavour of youthful hyperbole about the latter part of this letter, it must, on the other hand, be admitted that the paragraph in which the italics occur, so far from youthfulness, exhibits a quite remarkable maturity for a lad not yet twenty.

With this letter the correspondence with Carlyle ended for the time; but nearly two years later (in January 1842) Stirling re-opened it with a long letter of a much more personal nature than his first, accompanied with some of his early writings, including the *Ballad of Merla.* It is the letter of the disciple to the master, seeking for guidance and counsel in the mental difficulties with which he found himself beset—reverent, enthusiastic, unreserved. It is to this letter that reference has already been made more than once in the previous pages. It cannot be given here, as its writer has forbidden its publication; but one sentence from it, it is permissible to quote, since it is already made public

by the following reference to it in the *Secret of Hegel*:—

"In a letter written to a literary veteran, some twenty years ago, by a stricken youth,—in one of those intrusions which are, to budd*ing* letters, in the light of love, so natural, but to budd*ed* letters, in the light of experience, so unendurable,—there occurs the following passage:—'I lie in the centre of this *me*, this dew-drop, round which the rays of Deity, interpenetrating and passing through it, paint the spectrum of the universe.' This may be allowed to be a fair symbol for idealism in general; and the same youth, separated by many years from any knowledge of German, stumbled in his thoughts on what may perhaps be allowed to be a fair symbol for the phase of idealism which now occupies us."

Of Carlyle's reply to the letter in question, Stirling, writing in 1886, said: "I am inclined to confess that, with the 'Essays' before me, with the 'Mahomet' before me, still I know of no more perfect piece of writing than that letter in the whole compass of the Carlyle literature; and this, whether we look to the matter, or whether we look even to the expression alone. . . . The generous welcome [in the letter] to the mere callow enthusiasm of young literature in a complete stranger,—the wonderfully ungrudging sacrifice both of time and labour in it,—the earnest sincerity and inestimable weight of the counsels,—the incomparable felicity of the characteristic figures,—the perfectly admirable finish of the composition generally: all this cannot but impress, and even surprise. There is a flood to the heart with the exclamation, 'That is the true *grit*'; and Carlyle, after all, must have been superlatively a 'fine fellow,' a really good, true, and great man!"

Although this letter has already been published separately (in 1886) under the title, *Thomas Carlyle's Counsels to a Literary Aspirant*, it has been decided to give it here in full, partly because it is felt that no biography of Stirling would be complete which did not include it, and partly because the letter is in

itself so excellent, both in language and in thought, that it would be hardly possible for literary young men to have too many opportunities of reading it. Indeed it is doubtful whether, in the whole field of epistolary literature, it would be possible to match it for the combination of wisdom, sincerity, and originality of expression which it exhibits.

"CHELSEA,
18*th January* 1842.

"MY DEAR SIR,—The decision you so earnestly expect ought at least to be sent you soon; unfortunately, it is all the kindness I can show you at present. I have read the whole of your prose manuscript. If you knew what an element one lives in here, this of itself might be proof that you are something to me! The poetic manuscript I have not read in whole, but only in parts—such parts as seemed sufficient for grounding a practical conclusion on; and this I now in great haste proceed to transmit to you.

"It appears to me clearly altogether improbable that any bookseller, in these times of the book-trade, would so much as consent to publish your MS. at his own cost, far less pay down any sum of money for it. Nay, I am not at all sure, harsh as this may seem, that it were for your own real good to have it published, to have it even what is called 'succeed.' There is undoubtedly sign of talent in it; but talent in far too loose, crude, and unformed a condition. To have *such* accounted real finished talent, and praised and preached abroad, is precisely the fatallest future for a youth of any merit,—the sweetness in the mouth, which in the belly becomes bitter as gall. You will understand all that better, I hope, some ten years hence, and twenty years hence better still. But, on the whole, however that may be, I hesitate not to pronounce your poem entirely unworkable as a financial element, in this

place, at this time; and advise you not to spend more effort in that direction, but to quit it altogether for some more promising one. I at least, who know hardly any bookseller, and have indeed small sympathy with their trade and aims at present, must profess my inability to make any helpful use of this MS. I will, if you still request it, submit the paper to the publisher of *Fraser's Magazine*, the only bookseller I speak to once in six months; but I must say beforehand that I think he has no chance to accept it. This is my sincere verdict. A much politer and softer to the ear might easily have been written; but my words are to do you good if they can, and a deeper feeling of regard orders me to avoid all flattering unctions in your case.

"You seem to me a young man to whom Nature has given a superior endowment, which you run a considerable risk of *failing* to unfold. Alas, it is so easy to fail! You have in you that generous warmth of heart which is usually, if it be well guided, the mother-soil of all sorts of talent; but which also, if ill guided, can run up into miserablest waste and weeds. Your mind is opening in many directions, great ideas or prophecies of ideas announcing themselves to you; all this is well, and the best. But, as I can discern withal, all this must as yet be kept in, held down with iron rigour, till it fashion and articulate itself; the cruellest waste for it were to dig it all out at present as germinating seed, to let it all rush up as worthless spurry and chickweed. My dear young friend, you must learn the indispensable significance of hard, stern, long-continued *labour*. Grudge not labour, grudge not pain, disappointment, sorrow, or distress of any kind—all is for your good, if you can endeavour and endure. If you cannot, why then it is all hopeless. No man ever grew to anything who durst not look death itself in the face, and say to *all* kinds of martyrdom, 'Ye shall not subdue me!' Be of courage; a man

lies in you: but a man is not born the second time, any more than the first, without travail. Your desultory mode of study hitherto has probably been a great misfortune—a thing to be pitied, as I well know, and not to be blamed as times now go; but it is a thing you must correct and get the better of. I fancy I discern in you, indeed, a certain natural tendency to haste, crudity, semi-articulate diffusion. I earnestly entreat you, stand up against that unmercifully as against your worst foe! It will never do. The world wants alcohol, not beer-wort. It is a crime to produce the latter, if the former be in you. You must learn the meaning of *silence*—that forgotten knowledge of silence I am always speaking of. Be in no haste to speak yourself. Why be *porous*, incontinent? Nothing can ferment itself to clearness in a *colander*. Pray that you may be *forced* to hold your tongue. The longer you keep silence, the richer will your speech be when it does come.

"Practically, my advice were very decidedly that you *kept* by medicine; that you resolved faithfully to learn it, on all sides of it, and make yourself in actual fact an Ἰατρὸς, a man that *could heal disease*. I am very serious in this. Pecuniary means will occasion difficulty;[1] but they need not prove insuperable if you bestir yourself. If a man bestir himself, what thing *is* insuperable? Your present wishes, tastes, etc., ought to go for little with you. A man who cannot gird himself into harness will take no weight along these highways! I would even advise that you resolutely postponed, into the unexplored uncertainty of the Future, all concern with literature; determined to set no store by that, to let it come or stay away as it might chance to like. As a trade, I will protest against your meddling with it; describe it as the fright-

[1] Stirling has a note here:—"There was no such difficulty in reality."

fullest, fatallest, too generally despicablest of all trades now followed under the sun. He that can, Mithridates-like, make poison his aliment, let him live in it, and conquer (by *suffering*) first of all; let no other try it. A steady course of professional industry has ever been held the usefullest support for *mind* as well as body: I heartily agree with that. And often I have said, What profession is there equal in true nobleness to medicine? He that can abolish pain, relieve his fellow mortal from sickness, he is the indisputably usefullest of all men. Him savage and civilized will honour. He is in the right, be in the wrong who may. As a Lord Chancellor, under one's horse-hair wig, there might be misgivings; still more perhaps as a Lord Primate, under one's cauliflower; but if I could heal disease, I should say to all men and angels without fear, '*En, ecce!*'

"If literature do unfold itself at length under shelter of such a profession, then let literature be welcome; it will be safe, beneficial, and have a chance to be true and wise in such circumstances. How many true physicians have turned out to be true speakers, or even singers! A man *can* first speak when he has got to *know* something; and knowledge comes from experience alone. My decided advice is that you stand resolutely by medicine, determined to find an honest livelihood by medicine, and do a man's task in that way. Then is there a solid *back-bone* in one's existence, round which all beautiful and wholesome things will grow.

"And so farewell for the present; and a good genius guide you—a good, patient, valiant heart, which is the best of all geniuses! I have not time to write another word.—Yours, with many good wishes, T. CARLYLE."

On the time-yellowed pages, with their faded writing, on which Stirling at twenty-one copied out

the correspondence "for Jeannie," there is added, in darker, firmer characters, by Stirling at forty-six: —"Carlyle's letters, the originals of which will be found elsewhere, are of great value, but my own young foolish letters are to be BURNED. *First* correspondence not so bad.—J. H. Stirling, 1866."

So does forty-six pass judgment on twenty-one!

CHAPTER IV

1843-1845

Early Manhood—The Start in Life—Pontypool—Some Welsh Characters—*The Foreign Country at Home*—South Wales—The Iron-masters—The Merthyr Riots

THE year and a half which follows the correspondence with Carlyle is, as regards any records of the life of Stirling, almost absolutely blank—a blank which, unfortunately, cannot be filled by the recollections of any of those now living. All that we know with certainty regarding this period is that Stirling faithfully followed the advice of Carlyle to "keep by medicine," and in July 1842 received the Diploma of the College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

After that date there occurs a gap of nearly fifteen months, and the next event recorded comes upon the biographer searching for materials with a sort of shock—"Sept. 30, 1843. Left Glasgow." The bareness and abruptness of the entry, without any allusion to preceding events, have a certain startling effect on one. It is written, with some later dates, on the inner cover of a small leather pocket portfolio, which bears also the inscription, "To James H. Stirling, Esq., from a Friend. Sept. 30, 1843." Who the "friend" was we are not told; but perhaps it is not impossible to guess.

With this gift, in all likelihood, in his breast pocket, and with all his worldly possessions—including, no doubt, his medical diploma, as well as some books and manuscripts—contained in a small, black, leather-covered box, studded with brass nails, which afterwards accompanied him in all his journeyings,

and is still in existence, the future philosopher set out for London. It is humiliating to feel that, while one is familiar with his travelling companion, the little, battered, old, leather-covered box, one knows next to nothing of the circumstances connected with the most important step which Stirling had hitherto taken in life. He was setting out on the first long journey he had ever undertaken; he was leaving his father's roof, and his native country; he was passing out of the period of youth and apprenticeship into that of manhood and independence—and all the information permitted to the biographer is contained in that brief note written on the cover of the little old portfolio—"Sept. 30, 1843. Left Glasgow"!

It would be interesting to know what were the reasons which led to the choice of London as his first stopping-place; how father and son parted—whether the cold reserve of the former showed any signs of melting—how the young man travelled to London, and what were his first impressions of the great metropolis. Of all this, however, we know nothing.

Of his stay in London, which lasted a little over a month, we have as little knowledge as of the events which led to his going thither. We know, however, that he was in search of employment, which he did not find it easy to obtain, and that his hopes and funds were alike pretty well exhausted when he at length secured the appointment of medical assistant to a Dr Lawrence in Pontypool, Monmouthshire. It was during his stay in London, when he was beginning to despair of finding work, that he sent to *Punch* the following satirical advertisement, which appeared in one of the numbers for November 1843:—

"DOUCEUR TO THE INFLUENTIAL

"A gentleman who has been ten years at the

University, and who is possessed of sundry gifts and acquirements, mathematical, metaphysical, philosophical, literary, scientific, and otherwise, begs to announce his full acquiescence in the verdict of the public as to the uselessness of such gifts and acquirements; and as he has *twenty shillings* to spare, will be most happy to make over the same to any proprietor of a street-crossing who will initiate him into the mysteries of the profession, and procure him a good thoroughfare. The muddier the better. Thinks he might be able to manage the conductorship of an omnibus, but not the drivership. Presumes to hope he could grind a street organ, but thinks himself best qualified for the crossing.

"*Mem.* Can give no references—only the twenty shillings."

The next entry on the cover of the little portfolio is even more laconic than the previous one. "Nov. 5, Pontypool"—that is all! In this case, however, the little portfolio is, fortunately, not the only source of information. In *The Foreign Country at Home* we are permitted to accompany its author on his journey to Pontypool, and to get a vivid glimpse, not only of Pontypool, but of the scenery and people of South Wales, where the next eight years of his life were passed.

The *strangeness* of the country to which he was now called, and of all connected with it, so impressed the young, untravelled Scot that he seems to have transferred it *alive*, as it were, to his pages; and on reading the Welsh articles, one is overwhelmed with the sense of novelty and surprise which their writer experienced when he alighted in the dark from the coach, which had brought him from Newport to Pontypool, and followed a guide unknown "into a house unknown, to face people unknown, in this unknown, unseen, strange witch of a place that is written down Pont-y-pool."

But the Welsh articles strike one with a sense, not only of *strangeness*, but also of *reality*. Those are real people—those fellow-passengers of the young Scot, on board the little steamer which bore him from Bristol to Newport, across the "dirty, yellow clay-washings" which were called sea, and which he could not help contrasting with the sea he knew, "into which it was such a joy to look over the vessel's prow, as the beak below struck into white opacity the all but invisible water." There was the "tall, light, stiff, elderly Welshman, who walked with a stick, a slight stoop, and an eternal simper," and was for ever singing the praises of Newport, where he lived. "There never was such a place as Newport. 'Yiss, sure, it was a famoos place Newport—it beat—it beat—what did it beat, sir?—it beat Cardiff!'" Then, seeing that his listener was not very much impressed, he became more daring in his comparisons. "'Yiss, indeed! yiss to goodness! it beat—it beat—it 'ud beat Bristol!'" Then there was the "great raw-boned Scotchman, with red hair, six feet and a half high, whose ear he [the Newportite] repeatedly climbed a-tiptoe to," and who was overheard to say, "Ay, mun, dae ye say sae? Od, it'll be anither Glescae!" And there was the man from Cardiff, "all cheek, with just a sprout of nose sufficient for the purposes of his barber," who, hearing his native town unfavourably compared with Newport, "cluck-clucked and gobble-gobbled out angrily such a series of stutters about the docks, the Cardiff docks, and his most noble the Marquis of Bute, that, ghastly and gasping, the Newportite was fain to withdraw himself." It seems worth while to give the conclusion of the meeting with the Newportite in Stirling's own words:—

"For solace, he [the Newportite] told me his story yet once more; and it would have been worth seeing my courteous air of attention and acceptance, while I could

scarcely decently cover the agonies of my internal laughter, and his rueful dubiousness of aspect while he scrutinized me for some manifestation of the demoralizing influence which his rejection by the Cardiff man must have produced on me. . . . I overtook my friend the Newportite on the bridge [at Newport], walking brisker than could have been expected, and snuffing up the air with uncommon satisfaction. I passed him with a simple, 'Well, we have arrived, sir!' for I hadn't the heart to ask for the dock. . . . As I passed through the town on the top of the coach, I caught a farewell glimpse of [him]: he was tapping at a little green door; and I made sure there was hot tea, with toasted cheese and leeks ready within for him."

We leave the Newportite knocking at his little green door, and return to Stirling whom we left, just alighted from the coach at Pontypool, following his guide into an unknown house, to face unknown people. Of those unknown people we are vouchsafed no glimpse, either in the pages of *The Foreign Country at Home* or elsewhere, nor can we recall any verbal description of them. Yet for several months Stirling must have lived under the same roof with them, and partaken of his daily meals at the same table. It is strange how, here and there, a day stands out clear to us in almost every moment of its twenty-four hours, like the brief glimpse of sunlit landscape between two tunnels to the traveller by rail; and then all is dark again! Perhaps the following little passage from *The Foreign Country*, however, may be admitted to throw a side-light on one at least of those whose roof he shared :—

"With the names of localities, by-the-bye, how puzzled I was—and how hopelessly I floundered amid the intricacies of such words as Pontnewynydd, Pentwyn, Golynos, Cwm Brau, etc., till the irritation of my Welsh host pronounced me an extraordinary speller! I thought it a highly justifiable *revanche* to ask him if Paralisis for Paralysis were not original and eccentric."

While we are permitted no glimpse of the

people with whom, at this period of his life, Stirling was in daily association, we are given a full and vivid description of the strange new country in which he now found himself—a "foreign country at home," truly! The scenery and the people—their clothes, houses, customs, manners, and character—are brought before us with the clearness of actual vision. Here is the description of a visit to a farm-house—a *superior* farm-house! The visitor, after losing himself "in a little wood of twigs," making his way "through bushes and fences, and across calf-deep fields, and over dry walls tumbling all abroad," which constitute the approach (!) to the farm from the high-road, finds himself at last in "the purlieus of the farm-house—a little chaos of bulging, dry-stone structures, with heaps of rubbish, not in one place, but in all."

"You cannot, for the life of you, make out which is cow-house and which is stable. Nay, worse, you cannot, for the life of you, make out which is out-house and which is dwelling-house, and suppose you do decide on this latter point, you cannot, for ten lives of you, make out which is back and which is front. That rank little paddock, with its forlorn cabbages and droop-headed leeks, with its tumble-down borders of stick, stone, iron-hoop, old barrel, thorn hedge, bramble, briar, or defunct chair, can never be a garden! At length, however, as you stumble noisily over the rubbish-heaps . . . you are relieved from these perplexities by the sudden yelp and rush of some half-a-dozen of a peculiar race of small, blue-grey, long-nosed, milk-eyed collies. A human voice follows them, shouting out some such sounds as 'Ki! ki! rast! rast! tan zone ki! On't bite, shir! she not bite!' . . . You stoop under a low doorway, in obedience to invitation. . . . You are some time before you can accommodate your pupils to the change of light; but presently you find it is a kitchen you have been introduced into. . . . The fireplace, you find, occupies the whole of one wall, except, in one corner, the door of entrance, and in the other, another door. . . . Within the capacious chimney, you may possibly perceive a rope line with clothes across it. The fender you discern to be the

segment of the iron wheel of some defunct tram. . . . The landlord having now got you as near the fire as he can, observes to you, proud of his English, 'Tish fine dai!' (pronounce dai, dye). To which, you having responded, he adds, 'Verree fine dai!' There is then a pause, which is terminated by the landlord opening and holding towards you a small, round-headed, flat, tin box containing snuff—light, high-dried Welsh; and at the same time uttering the interrogative word 'Shnuff?' and the deprecatory ones, 'Take pinch!' You accept, you inhale, you sneeze; he puts his finger on the cuff of your coat, and bringing his white, thin face to yours, he says, 'Shnuff good! 'tish good shnuff!' The goodwife then says some Welsh to you, at which you looking aghast, both say, 'Meelk! ha' dracht meelk!' You refuse or accept, and in either case, especially the former, there is another painful pause. You put various questions, but you are hardly understood, and you find the landlord's English limited to, 'I 'stand you now,' or 'I not 'stand you now,' with 'yiss, yiss!' 'ay, sure,' and a few such phrases."

Of course, those were long before the days of Free Education and the Board School. Here is a brief description of the Welsh teacher of the time :—

"There was a stout little fellow, with ragged, dusty, snuffy brown clothes, and a rabbit-skin cap, through the top of which his own hair appeared. He had a broad, smooth, ruddy-sallow face; and looked to me like one of those men who dyspeptically fatten within doors, without exercise, amid dust and cobwebs. They told me he was a teacher! He snivelled and stuttered, *not* her Majesty's English. I wondered what he taught, and whom he taught."

While those passages, and many others, in his Welsh articles show us vividly the country in which he lived at this time, and the people with whom he came in contact, only this one little passage seems to give us a glimpse of the writer himself—of his thoughts and feelings in the midst of his new surroundings :—

'From the hill over Cwm Brau, I recollect there was

a fine view of the country that stretched and spread to Newport and the Severn. I think it was about my only delight in Pont-y-pool to catch from that hill the far glitter of the sea; and if to that the white glimpse of a sail were added, the charm was complete."

"I think it was about my only delight in Pont-y-pool." That casual remark tells, doubtless, a good deal of the inner history of the writer at the time. It tells of the home-sickness of the young Scot in his "Foreign Country," of the longing of the poet-littérateur to escape from the comparatively uncongenial world of medicine to his native realm, of the yearning of the lover for the sight of his mistress, separated from him by hundreds of miles. Two sets of verses—"Lonely" and "Parted," published among the *Saved Leaves* in 1878—seem to confirm, in part at least, the suggestion contained in that chance phrase in the Welsh article. Both, however, belong to a slightly later period than the Ponty-pool time, the earlier of the two ("Lonely") having been written in September 1844, some months after Stirling had left that place.

Between the writing of these verses and his earliest correspondence with Carlyle, there is a period of over four years during which Stirling, following Carlyle's advice, seems to have been learning "the meaning of silence." During those four years, he wrote nothing, or at least *preserved* nothing, if he did write. He applied himself whole-heartedly to the work of his profession, and took the responsibility of his position very seriously. In Pontypool he was kept very hard at work, the necessity of making himself, to some extent, acquainted with the Welsh language, and the long distances which he had often to ride, from the house of one patient to another, occupying a great deal of his time. As, however, in the course of time, he became more at home with his work, it

appeared that after all medicine need not of necessity "strangle literature." As we shall see, some of his finest literary, as contrasted with his philosophical, writings belong to the years from 1845 to 1851, when he was in very active practice as a surgeon.

The next date on the cover of the little portfolio is "April /44, Hirwain." In spite of the strangeness, the *Welshness* of Pontypool, Stirling had been disappointed to find that it was not *in* Wales, since Monmouthshire was reckoned an English county, and, as he says himself, "I longed to be able to set down my foot on soil that neither map nor mortal could deny to be Welsh." He had his wish in April 1844.

"The opportunity came sooner than I expected; and leaving the Welsh of Pont-y-pool with tears in my eyes, and the firm belief that they were the most simple, courteous, credulous, and primitive of peoples, I found myself one fine spring afternoon on the box of a rattling, dashing, thorough-going mail *en route* for Merthyr and Swansea *via* Abergavenny. . . . I had to stay a night in Abergavenny, much to my own satisfaction, for *Humphrey Clinker* had made it a glorified creature of the mind to me. . . . I strolled up and down the town, I was never tired of poking into every street and lane I chanced upon. In the morning, too, I had a little available time, and that I applied to a walk into the surrounding country. Truly, it was most beautiful! No man need be sorry to go and live in Abergavenny. There is one green mountain there, of a singular shape, which it is quite a joy to gaze on; there is a lovely pastoral stream, too, clear, and bright, and musical; there are pleasant, pleasant roads, that well out away into pleasant, pleasant fields, between sweet hedges, and past neat gateways with honey-suckled lodges; and the town itself is as clean and wholesome as mind can wish for. Altogether, Abergavenny abides in my remembrance like the perfumed leaves of some sweet-briar I had plucked."

There is a strong temptation to quote here the entire description of the coach-ride from

Abergavenny to Swansea, so wonderfully *real* and striking is it, with its contrast between the beauty of the natural scenery and the squalor and hideousness of the monstrous works of man; but a sense of proportion, and consideration of the mass of material belonging to this period forbid more than the following brief extract :—

"I do not believe that to be carried to New Zealand would present much greater contrasts than these iron highlands have for him who as yet knows only the well-cultivated lowlands. The clear Welsh air; the long ridges of hills that run like combs over bleak, bare commons; the exquisite miniature little valleys, that nestle in the mountain-bosoms down from these; the equally exquisite, rich, narrow straths, that lie like green ribands between two parallel hill-ranges; the uncouth houses; the uncouth towns of such; the uncouth language, the strange shapes of pliant forms and supple features; the gigantic iron-works, that, amid blue, excavated mountains, thunder with the most indescribable din, and belch forth fire and smoke upon the scene; all is novel, strange, and unexampled; and all these things the ride from Abergavenny to Swansea abundantly possesses . . . for grandeur and for squalor, for beauty and for ugliness, for importance and for meanness, for interestingness and for uninterestingness, it is unsurpassed in the kingdom."

It must be remembered that those years of Stirling's sojourn in Wales belonged to what may not unfitly be called the *Iron Age*. The so-called Industrial Revolution, inaugurated in the latter part of the eighteenth century by the invention of *spinning-jennies*, and steam engines, and other labour-saving machinery, had brought about a very largely-increased demand for iron, which, moreover, in more recent years, had begun to be applied to many uses for which, previously, it had been thought totally unsuitable. Only some half-century or so before the time when Stirling arrived in Pontypool, John Wilkinson, one of the greatest iron-masters of his day, had been thought "iron mad" because he

believed that that metal could be employed for making bridges and ships, and for many other purposes for which it had not previously been used; and already the celebrated iron suspension bridge over the Menai Strait, built by the great Scottish engineer, Telford, was some seventeen years old, while an iron steamer (built by Napier of Glasgow) began plying between Glasgow and Dublin in the very year when Stirling set out from his native town to make his way in life alone. Besides bridges and ships, the railways, which at that time were being laid down all over the country with feverish haste, made an increased demand for iron. It was not yet thirty years since the first experimental line, laid by Stephenson between Stockton and Darlington, had been opened, and the railway mania was just about its height in the country. It was in 1845 that Lord Cockburn described Britain as "an island of lunatics, all railway mad."

With such an enormously increased demand for iron, it was not to be wondered at that the mineral field of South Wales suddenly rose to immense importance, and became the scene of a vast activity.

"In the wilds, where, some forty years ago, for miles and miles over the barren desolation, no object moved but the sheep, the sheep-dog, and the shepherd—in those very wilds where, some forty years ago, an old Welsh crone, not without misgivings, passed her hand inquiringly from the head to the heel of an English stripling, muttering, 'Diew! diew! a Sais, is he?' and exclaiming at length, in the most posed astonishment, 'N'enwdyn! the sam' as we, the sam' as we he is!'—in those very wilds are scores upon scores of mighty blast furnaces, and thousands upon thousands of populous homesteads. The rapidity with which such places as Nantyglo, Tredegar, Rhymney, Dowlais, Merthyr, Aberdare, etc., have grown and risen is altogether wonderful."

Of course all this immense activity—all those scores of blast-furnaces, and thousands of workers—could not but make fortunes for some lucky men.

Those were the days of the Welsh iron-kings, the predecessors of the American millionaires and multi-millionaires, though, as Stirling believed, at the time when he arrived in Wales, the iron-masters had "already reached their *acme*, and must now, like all other sublunary things, culminate and decline." Some half-dozen of them had, up till then, "possessed advantages by no means transferable." They had "obtained their materials for nothing, nearly nothing, or (by sub-leases) less than nothing." But "old leases fall in daily; and rent will henceforth infinitely increase the price of the materials, as competition will henceforth infinitely diminish the profits of them."

Meantime, the first-comers—the half-dozen pioneers—had, as the modern saying is, made their pile, and were more or less independent of later caprices of Fortune. Of those half-dozen, the man who was regarded as "*par excellence* the Welsh iron-master" was William Crawshay, whose grandfather "if not the first, was about the first, who cut the sod" of the Welsh mountains. It was this Crawshay, or rather his son, Frank Crawshay, who was to be Stirling's "chief"[1] at Hirwain, where he was first assistant, then (in 1845) partner, and lastly (in 1846) sole surgeon to the great iron-works. It seems most likely, if not quite certain, that it is Frank Crawshay who is described in the following passage from *The Foreign Country*. Stirling is passing through Merthyr on his coach-ride from Abergavenny to Swansea, when—

"Suddenly military music strikes on the ear, surging the heart, and filling the eyes. A brass band comes up the street; behind it is a brawny figure, with the front, power, and reputation of a young Antony. That is an iron-master; and that is his surgeon beside him. They are followed by an orderly procession of well-dressed workmen, with sashes, banners, and other paraphernalia. . . . As you mount the hill, you see, down in the valley, tents erected: thither wends the procession you have seen; and,

[1] "Chief" is Stirling's own word.

as you listen to the romantic story of the coachman in regard to the iron-masters in question, about their amazing personal strength, their recklessness of heat or cold, of wet or dry, of night or day, of time or season; their power of doing the work of any one workman in their gigantic works, above ground or under ground, as well as that workman, and better than that workman,—as you hear this tale, I say, and as you see the scene of festivity before your eyes, and hear the glorious music floating up the valley, and re-image the heroic figure that you saw, knowing, moreover, that he is a millionaire, and that these are but his workmen beside him, you believe that the old times are resuscitated—the grand old times, when master mingled with man, rest with toil, and festivity with drudgery."

How vividly this passage brings before us, not only the scene—the village street, the procession, the brass band, the tents in the valley, and the "heroic figure" of the "young Antony"—but the person who saw it all in the golden light which imagination throws on all it looks on—the man who was still so young, and simple, and enthusiastic that the sight of a commonplace procession of ordinary workmen, and the sound of a commonplace brass band (doubtless playing no more "glorious music" than the "March of the Men of Harlech" slightly out of tune!) could rouse him to the belief that the Heroic Age had come again!

In the months that followed, a pretty close association with his "young Antony" (if, indeed, the "heroic figure" described was that of Frank Crawshay) robbed him of a great deal of the glamour with which a first glimpse had invested him; but he always remained in Stirling's memory—and in the memories of those who, fifty years later, frequently heard him described—a singularly striking, and even romantic figure. Tall, and of a powerful build, with a handsome face and head, he was of a restlessly active temperament, bold and daring, self-willed and overbearing, passionate and hot-tempered—a very Berserker when roused to anger.

One taste which Crawshay and Stirling had in common was a love of boating; and when the young surgeon was not occupied with his many professional engagements, he would sometimes enjoy a sail with his "chief" in the little sailing boat, *Red Rover*, which the latter kept on a small lake, or large pond, in the neighbourhood of Hirwain. This custom led to a little incident which is perhaps worth recording as illustrative of character. On one occasion, when a stiff wind was blowing down the little lake, Crawshay dared Stirling to sail to the upper end, turn the boat, and sail back again. Stirling was young, daring, and possessed of enough youthful vanity to resent even the appearance of a slur on his courage: he took up the challenge. Along with the single boatman who "manned" the little craft, he went on board, and took command of the rudder. By judicious tacking, he managed to sail up the lake; but the real difficulty, and danger, lay in the turning round, which must expose the boat broadside to the wind. With his hand on the rudder, Stirling hesitated for a moment while he made up his mind as to his course. To go on and land, was to own himself beaten, to lose his bet; while, on the other hand, to turn the boat in the eye of the wind was certainly to sink it. Only for a moment he hesitated, then the "dare-devil" which, in those days, undoubtedly formed one of the many elements in the character of the future philosopher, carried the day. "Can you swim, George?" he asked the boatman. "Ay, ay, sir," was the answer; and the next minute, the boat, turned broadside to the breeze, was rapidly sinking, while Stirling—attired in a heavy top-coat and long riding-boots!—was striking out for the shore. After a few strokes he glanced backwards to see if it was well with his companion, and beheld him motionless, calmly clinging to the mast of the submerged boat! "The wretch!" he used to exclaim, when he told the story in later years, indig-

nant at the effect of his *coup* being spoiled. "He knew very well that the water was not deep enough to submerge the boat entirely." When Crawshay, white and agitated, reached the point in the shore for which Stirling was making, he found the latter unconcernedly running the water out of his long boots!

While we are speaking of Crawshay, it may as well be said here that, as might have been expected, considering his character and that of Stirling, with his independent spirit, his pride, and sensitiveness, collisions occurred between them, one of them (in 1848) serious enough to induce Stirling to resign his appointment.

The rise into importance of its mineral field and its iron-masters was not the only circumstance which lent a special interest to Wales in the early "forties." Only some three or four years before Stirling landed at Newport, that town had been the scene of a great Chartist rising. In Merthyr, too, there had been riots not long before Stirling set foot there; and in *The Foreign Country* he repictures the scenes that took place with a vividness not surpassed by any passage in Carlyle's *French Revolution*. The "thousands of motley savages," "with inflamed faces that promise perdition to the whole universe," seem to move actually before us; we seem to hear their volleys of "Diaouls!" to see the "Little Petticoats," as the Welsh called the Highlanders, standing in file before the door of the house they are guarding, eating their bread and cheese, "while the scummy river of the mob, hoarse in Welsh, flows around and between them."

"Their comrades [the comrades of the file of Highlanders] are within the house; and the iron-masters from the windows, by threats and conciliations, endeavour to disperse the rabble. In vain: clamour, bluster, swagger, and gesticulation are as rank as ever; and it seems a very explosion of 'diaouls' . . . the Little Petticoats are quite

impervious; Welsh oaths fall dead on them; they eat their victuals. Suddenly, there is a cry, a rush, a bustle: the muskets of the inapprehensive soldiery are seized by the mob, and crash now on the skulls of their owners. Stunned, stupid, bleeding, battered, weaponless, these few Highlanders are tossed upon the waves of the crowd, still struggling for the haven of the inn. The sword of an officer is sheathed in the body of a ring-leader. The sharp crack of musketry rings on the ear. The mob fires into the windows; and bullets pass between iron-masters. The Little Petticoats within, indignant at the usage of their comrades, reply with interest. . . . The street is clear; the mob has dispersed suddenly into their cabins, or into the defiles of their tips. But all night long there are tumult, agitation, apprehension and excitement everywhere. The gentlemen and the soldiery repair to Penydarran House, and fortify the same. Brave messengers, with determined hearts, ride through the darkness to Cardiff, to Brecon, to Swansea, in quest of arms, in quest of military. . . . Morning breaks: from Tredegar—Rhymney—from all over the hills—from Newbridge, from Aberdare, from Hirwain—from every colliery or iron-work, far or near, come droves of workmen to swell the numbers of the insurgents. . . . The tips have their thousands; the hill over Aberdare has its thousands; and on the stony precipices that overhang the Brecon road there are other thousands. . . . The mouth of the defile is blocked up by a numerous band; and all up the precipices there are others busy unfixing the rocks, and ready to roll them down on the heads of all who may be bold enough to try a passage . . . and still the gentlemen are at Penydarran, with the handful of Little Petticoats. The Little Petticoats are at their ease, however, and know what they know. They are increased to about a hundred now; for the ammunition and the reinforcement have found a way over the hills to them. There are also some three hundred mounted yeomanry. The various multitudes have now collected into one multitude, and have settled on the Merthyr tips. The gentlemen, with the yeomanry and the Highlanders, leave their fastnesses, and march upon them. The Riot Act is read; they are called on to disperse; they refuse. Forward, brave mounted yeomanry! The brave mounted yeomanry are sluggish. 'Right and left, then,' shouts a brave man, 'and my little Highlanders will do it!' The hundred Little Petticoats step to the

front—forward upon thousands: they level their muskets: they are in act to fire: an iron-master throws himself before them, yet again beseeches the mob—succeeds. The motley rabble melts from their eyes like snow; and the Merthyr riots have come to their conclusion."

When one reads the description of those scenes of riot, it is difficult to believe that they took place only some seventy years or so ago. There is a sort of primitive savagery about the mob, which seems to suggest a much earlier period. Yet it was among people such as these that Stirling lived from 1843 to 1851, learning their language, studying their habits and characters, and healing, or endeavouring to heal, their diseases and ailments.

CHAPTER V

1845

First Publications — Douglas Jerrold — *The Novelist and the Milliner—The Novel Blowers—The Universal Strike—Sleeping Beauty*

THE period of silence which, partly, perhaps, in obedience to Carlyle's injunctions, partly through stress of occupation, Stirling had observed for some four years or so, came to an end in 1845—a year remarkable in Stirling's life for the amount and excellence of his literary production, and also for the appearance of his first published article. It was in that year, too—through the introduction of that first published article—that he came in contact with Douglas Jerrold. The circumstances are related in his *Essay on Jerrold*, published in 1868:—

"The prospectus of the *Shilling Magazine* [edited by Jerrold] had reached me, busy with professional avocations, in the heart of the iron district of South Wales; and its calm, high, generous tone of universal sympathy, hope, promise, spoke at once to my inmost feelings. The first number corresponded to the promise of the prospectus, and I could not resist penning and transmitting an article to the editor. In a few days after the despatch of my paper, I was surprised by the receipt of a small note in a hand unknown to me—in a hand altogether unexampled in any correspondence I had yet seen. In motion evidently facile, fluent, swift—swift almost as thought itself—it was yet as distinct in its peculiar decisive obliquity as if it had been engraved—sharp and firm in its exquisitely minute fineness as if the engraving implement had been the keenest of needles. 'Surely,' thought I, 'the *Iliad* in a nut-shell is now conceivable.'

"It may readily be supposed that I opened and read this note with no inconsiderable curiosity. . . . There it lies before me, and all the emotions it excited are fresh

again within me—fresh as when, on the outside of that well-known post-office in that well-known Welsh iron valley, I first opened and read it."

Here is the little note, given in full—not with a blank for the name of the article offered, as it appeared in Stirling's *Essay*. To anyone who has had experience of the ways of editors, the emotions of surprise and gratification of the unknown young surgeon in the out-of-the-way Welsh valley, on receipt of such a note, will not appear by any means extravagant.

"*Jan.* 24,
WEST LODGE, PUTNEY.

"SIR,—I have the pleasure to inform you that your paper, *The Novelist and the Milliner*, will appear in the next number.

"Should you feel inclined to favour me with other papers, it will be desirable that I should have them as early as possible in the month.—Yours faithfully, DOUGLAS JERROLD."

Few indeed are the unknown, would-be contributors who have received such a letter as this—and at so short delay—from the editor to whom, in fear and trembling, if with eager hope, they have ventured to send their treasured MSS.! Stirling was keenly aware of the *unusualness* of so favourable a reception of an unknown writer by a well-known editor. He goes on to say :—

"What experience I had yet had of applications to the editors of magazines had been all so different, that surprise, on this occasion, could hardly yield even to gratification. . . . I had sent my article in the middle of January, and had expected no notice of my communication even in the February number. I had looked to the number for March as likely to contain the word of acceptance or rejection ; and here, before I had even seen the advertisement of the contents of the new number, was a polite acknowledgment of acceptance from the editor himself, and with an invitation to send more!"

The article in question (*The Novelist and the Milliner*) appeared in the February number of the *Shilling Magazine*, and was followed, in May of the same year, by another of a kindred character—*The Novel Blowers, or Hot-pressed Heroes*. It is sixty-six years ago since those two papers appeared, yet, on reading them, one might well imagine that they had been expressly written by way of protest against an evil of the present day—the Sixpenny Shocker and the Penny Dreadful. They are, in fact, an *exposé* of the bad effects on character of the reading of cheap fiction—that is, so far as their *moral* is concerned; for in form they are, both of them, fresh, subtle, humorous sketches of character. In the first, we are introduced to the Milliner, or rather the dressmaker (the sex of the writer betrays itself in the incorrect designation, as well as in a few inaccuracies with regard to technical details!) after business hours:—

"At shut of even and of shop—when work is done—when tired needles rest in pocket-books—when back-stitch and base-stitch, splay-seam and over-seam, cuffs, and ruffs, and muffs, and puffs, spencers and stomachers, are forgotten quite—when skirts and bodies, mantles, frocks, pelisses, finished or unfinished, thrust into half-open drawers, drooping from bed-post and from window-shutter, helpless over chairs, seated sinkingly beneath the table or upon, are all unthought-of and unseen."

Nervously exhausted with her day's toil, and sorely in need of rest, she yet cannot resist the attractions of the three-volume novel from the circulating library, though it rob her of hours of sleep, and strain the eyes already reddened and bleared with the demands of the day's work.

"Sit you not there [it is the Novelist who addresses the Milliner], barely supported on the edge of your receding chair, with quivering feet upon the fender? Sit you not there, wide-kneed o'er the grate, unseen, at ease—with stooped head, flushed cheek, and glittering eye—turning so eager-rapid, with that yellow, needle-eaten finger, our

reddened, fair-marged pages . . . till even perfumes of burning worsted (for indeed, the flannel petticoat *will* take on process of eremacausis—slow combustion) can hardly bring you to your dim room and drooping-skirts again! And more; the fire extinguished (by the laying on of hands) . . . stir you not up the few red cinders, nervously, into hectic flushes . . . fitful, momentary gleams, which . . . give to sight the mystical inscriptions, then snatch them back to night again. Dash you not up then, passionately, in sudden burst of galled vexation, paroxysm of fret abruptly yielded to? Count you not, with hurried, shivering feverishness, how many chapters you have yet to read before the end may come? Dash you not down again, in dogged self-will, stooped head and flushed cheek placed defiantly on the very bars, resolute to master, ere the night shall end, our dear third volume?"

The dying-out of the last red flicker in the grate defeats her resolve; but even then, she does not retire to healthful sleep. She sits open-eyed in her chair by the dead fire, dreaming—"thin, wry-shouldered, red-eyed and angular," though she is—dreaming that *she* is herself the "lady fair" she has been reading of, and seeing herself in all the situations suitable for a heroine of romance! The vivid sketch which follows of the various and varied situations into which the Milliner's imagination leads her, affords a criticism of the different classes of fiction—the romantic, the sensational, the domestic—at the same time that it lays bare before us the character of the Milliner herself—her weak sentimentality, her small vanity, her little envies and jealousies. It is not till she hears the voice of the watchman beneath her window, "drowsily snuffling out half-past two," that she at length drags herself to bed, slipping beneath her pillow, "our dear third volume," which she hopes to finish in the morning.

"But, alas! you do but wake to find you have overslept yourself. Languid, worn-out, exhausted—even more so than at laying-by of the needle on the night before—to you slumber has brought no rest, repose no blessing. You

lie in sort of bitter-sweet prostration; sleepy, sleepy, but nervously incapable of sleep. You cannot rise; it seems as if some strange affinity—attraction—were glueing you to the bed beneath . . . and when at length, with sudden effort of the will, you . . . spring upon the floor, go you not about your little processes of dress drowsily and sulkily . . . empty of hope, heartless, comfortless, miserable? For to you, as virtually often to all of us, again has this life become a broken loop, a burst button-hole; or if not burst, not broken, to the loop there is no hook, to the button-hole no button."

In the *Novel Blowers*, the characterization is even more vivid, more subtle, than in the *Novelist and the Milliner*. That "long, irregular, unlicked Juvenal" seems to be placed alive before us, and all the wheels, and levers, and cranks of his inner mechanism exposed naked to our gaze. We watch him in his convulsions of adolescence—convulsions aggravated by a course of novel-reading—we smile at his *greenness*, his self-consciousness, his innocent egotism, his simple vanity, his susceptibility; his transparent artifices to attract the attention of the other sex, or to play the rôle of the hero of romance, move us to laughter. See him on board a steamer, for instance, "pacing heroically along and across, now larboard, now starboard, in full expectation of some huge adventure."

"Ha! already has he not formed an eye-acquaintance with that sweet young maiden? . . . Amorous Juvenal! how the heart wells up! What impulse is there not, lifting one soft arm round her neck, with beaming eyes and liquid voice to whisper wooingly, 'Maiden! Canst thou love?' But no: he feels that overmuch; yet see the battery of charms he opens on her! Those airs of herohood—that walk upon the deck, toes with due divergence outwards, and outer edge of heel set down accurately and firmly first—those bright eyes flashing on her ever as he passes—surely, all is irresistible! He mounts the paddle-box. True, brave youth, your figure shows in strong relief, and gallantly you front the blast; but on that high spot blows not the breeze somewhat familiarly against your pantaloons? Ah, now he descends! He loiters round the

funnel, evidently making preparations for a renewed assault. His courage is wound up: he turns; he mounts the quarter-deck; once more he stalks before the fair one, having dexterously opened out his upper benjamin, and folded down the collar gracefully, so that the trimmer form within now shines from the divided hull victoriously upon her. With a natural love to elevated places, he ascends by the man at the wheel, and standing there with folded arms, looks out upon the waste of waters: so stood Napoleon eager for the port of Frejus: so stood Columbus anxious for the land of prophecy."

The transitions of the "Juvenal" from pose to pose—from that of the "rapt poet lost in rich reverie," to that of the artist gazing with delighted eye upon the scene, or of the Byronic hero, sunk in gloomy thoughts, or the profound scholar, mentally tearing to pieces the book he is reading—are described with great freshness and humour, and show an intimate acquaintance with the symptoms of that disease to which fiction-fed youth is peculiarly subject—namely, enlarged egotism. The paper ends with this *envoi*:—

"Ah, yes! Society reels tipsily beneath our influence [it is the Novelist who speaks]; youth steeps in an enervating, disintegrating bath of novelism: and petty vanity, fostered in our guano compost, driven by our artificial, hot-house heat, has every puniest larva quickened to a caterpillar, till the very air is darkened by a pestilential cloud of butterflies, and heaven is hid."

It was probably in reply to a suggested offer of the *Novel Blowers* for the *Shilling Magazine* that Stirling received the following letter from its editor:—

"*March* 19,
West Lodge, Putney Common.

"Dear Sir,—It will give me much pleasure to receive anything at your hand—your articles on the influence of novelism certainly. I, however, feel it necessary for the increasing influence of the magazine (and it *is* increasing) to give as great a variety as possible to the contents. A reader will be attracted to a paper with a new title, which,

it carrying the same heading from month to month, he might turn from as monotonous. The 'to be continued' is, in my opinion, the worst line a magazine can have, if more than once in the same number. We, too, are limited for space; and must fight, as much as possible, with *short swords*. I merely say this much in the hope of inducing you to vary the titles of the papers you contemplate. I was very much struck with the peculiar freshness and vigour of your first paper: it had thought and sinew in it.

"What you write of the iron district is melancholy enough,—but I suppose, all in good time. What each of us has to do in his small sphere is to hasten the advent of that 'all' to the best of his means.—Yours faithfully,

"Douglas Jerrold."

This is surely a somewhat remarkable letter for a new contributor to receive from the editor to whom he is known only by one article. The absence of all editorial airs, the frankness of the remarks on editorial business, the warmth and generosity of the praise bestowed on the work of his obscure contributor, and the naturalness and spontaneity of the word of practical wisdom with which the letter ends—all strike one as unusual. The qualities suggested by the letter—frankness, openness, naturalness, cordiality—were the same that appeared to Stirling most conspicuous in the *man*, when he had the good fortune to meet him.

"I[1] had only twice the pleasure of seeing Douglas Jerrold; the first time in May (I think) 1846, and the second time in April 1847. On both occasions I found him in that pleasant residence on Putney Lower Common, which his son so well and so lovingly describes. On the first occasion, his first words to me were, 'Why, I had you

[1] *Jerrold, Tennyson, and Macaulay*, p. 43.

in mind this very day'; and he proceeded to tell me of his newspaper, which he was then planning, and which made its *début* in the following July.[1] On both occasions he was as open, cordial, and unaffected as if it was an old friend he was receiving, and not a person comparatively unknown to him. He moved, talked, laughed in the most perfect spontaneity of freedom . . . he was a child of nature, as free, and frank, and unconstrained, and so as graceful as a child. . . . He chatted away, on the occasion I speak of, in the liveliest manner, gaily, frankly, unconstrainedly, and made no secret either of his thoughts and opinions, or of his predilections and antipathies. . . . During both visits, passages in his own history were as freely communicated as descriptions, anecdotes, and personal traits of his contemporaries. We talked of Carlyle: he could not say he liked his style, but he honoured him, for he was a man thoroughly in earnest, and had at heart every word he wrote. Did Carlyle come out among them? Yes: he was not quite an anchorite. He had met him at Bulwer's. They had talked of Tawell (the murderer of the day). He (Jerrold) had said something about the absurdity of capital punishments. Carlyle had burst out: 'The wretch! (Tawell) I would have had him trampled to pieces underfoot, and buried on the spot!' 'But I (Jerrold) said, *Cui bono—cui bono?*' This little anecdote made quite an impression on me . . . the whole scene flashed up vividly: the vehement Carlyle, all in fuliginous flame, and the deprecating '*Cui bono?*' of the astounded, not then vehement Jerrold; the stronger, broader conflagration appalling the weaker and narrower."

No excuse appears to be needed for quoting (again from the *Essay on Jerrold*) Stirling's description of Jerrold's appearance, and his account of their second, and last, meeting.

"Jerrold surprised me by the exceeding shortness of his stature, which was aggravated also by a considerable stoop. I do not think he could have stood much over five feet. He was not thin, meagre, or fragile to my eye, however. . . . Then the face was not a small one: he had a particular broad look across the jaw, partly owing,

[1] To this paper Stirling contributed, under the pseudonym of Fluellen, an article on the *Social Condition of S. Wales*, and two short papers on the *Welsh Utopia*.

probably, to the complete absence of whisker. The upper lip was long, but the mouth remarkably well formed; flexible, expressive, moving in time to every thought and feeling. I fancied it could be sulky, and very sulky too. But I said as much when I described his character as Scotch: for what Scotchman — ourselves inclusive — is not sulky? His nose was aquiline and *bien accusé*. His blue eyes, *naïfs* as violets, but quick as light, took quite a peculiar character from the bushy eyebrows that overhung them. Then the forehead, well relieved by the masses of brown hair carelessly flung back, was that of genius—smooth, and round, and delicate, and moderately high; for gigantic brows, colossal fronts, are the perquisites only of milkmen and greengrocers. . . . The second time I visited him he was kind enough to drive us (an American with weak eyes had dropped in) up to town. During the ride he was particularly chatty and agreeable. He told us of 'Black-eyed Susan' and Elliston; of his early marriage and difficulties. We had the anecdote of the French surgeon at Boulogne, who insulted his rheumatic agonies with '*Ce n'est rien*,' and got his retort in return. We had erudite discourses on wines, and descriptions of pleasant places to stay in. He told us his age. He talked of the clubs. He named his salary from *Punch*. . . . He chatted of Dickens, Thackeray, Leigh Hunt, Tom Taylor, and Albert Smith. Of all he spoke frankly, but discriminatingly, and without a trace of malice or ill-nature. In answer to the inquiry, 'What was Thackeray like?' he said: 'He's just a big fellow with a broken nose, and though I meet him weekly at the *Punch* dinner, I don't know him so well as I know you.' Dickens he mentioned with the greatest affection; and the articles of Thackeray and Tom Taylor were praised in the most ungrudging fashion. . . . And so we came to Trafalgar Square; and there we parted. I did not think then it was the last time I should see him . . . I did not think then that, returning from a six years' sojourn on the Continent, one of the first places I should visit in England would be Norwood Cemetery, to seek out there the grave of him who had once been kind to me."

When we read these extracts, we seem to be carried back sixty years, and to find ourselves beneath a literary firmament ablaze with stars of the

first magnitude, all of them at or near their zenith (for were not Tennyson and Browning, Dickens and Thackeray, and Thomas Carlyle all living, and in the full vigour of their powers?), and we are struck with the contrast between that splendid galaxy and the numerous little twinkling points of light which dimly illumine the dark skies that stretch above our heads in these later days.

To return to 1845 again, among Stirling's writings belonging to that year is his poem, *The Universal Strike*, the idea of which is the stagnation of all energy—moral energy. The poem falls into two parts — the first part written in Spenserian stanzas, the second in blank verse. It opens with an invocation to the muse, which in rhythm, and thought, and elevation of tone seems worthy to rank with the best of its kind :—

> "O Muse! I too would sing. I, all untried,
> Am passionate to don the golden woof,
> And cleave Empyrean with a penn of pride.
> Ah, let me! Be thou strong in my behoof!
> Great are the souls that dare. To front the proof
> Is glorious: and I, if but one spark
> Of intellect I strike, fear not the hoof
> Of malice. Let the crow croak! Hangs my mark
> High; and I would trample only death and the dark."

But, even as he writes—even as he implores his muse—the mood of dejection assails the poet :—

> "Big words, big words! All vanity! The weight
> Why lift of work? O life! O weariness!
> Far better were it not, inoccupate,
> To dream, and dream, and dream, in idleness—
> Dream after dream in large reposédness?
> The air is heavy and my limbs are weak;
> I cannot lift them—cannot bear the stress
> Of movement. Stale the best and flat: why seek
> Jargon's illimitable nothingness to eke?
>
> Where is the worth of this great thing, a bard?
> What use on earth the tuneful calling bland?
> One line—one word is oftentimes more hard
> To turn, than is the glebe beneath the hand
> Of labour. See! Yon clown upon the land

Hath cut the crop, gathered and bundled it,
An ample store, sufficient to withstand
The teeth of many living men; and yet,
In the same time, these are the verses I have writ."

Then imagination, taking its cue from the mood of the poet, pictures the result of the universal adoption of such a mood—pictures a world in which all, animate and inanimate alike, should "dream, and dream, and dream in idleness"—and blank verse now takes the place of Spenserian stanzas. We can only here give a glimpse of some of the most striking points of the picture:—

"Broods a horizon low, green, brown, morose,
Over the sullen ice, moveless in block,

. . . . . .

Motionless by a rift, a bear, head down:
Motionless over against, an Eskimo,
His pointed hut slow-heeling over edge
Of the dim universe, asleep in dream.

. . . . . .

The raft at its moorings will not even sway.
The stream itself, as though with eyes abashed,
Just slinks by the shut doors and windows blank
Of smokeless cottages, nor lifts a gleam.

. . . . . .

The priest, with incense in his hand, has stopped,
Sudden, by the altar, as though he asked
'What am I, then?—what is it that I do?'

. . . . . .

The sun glares in his place, and the white moon
Stares back upon him, dull. The universe
Folds into itself, sinking to the blank
And all-devouring maw of nothingness."

But the poet rouses himself, shakes off his paralyzing torpor; and the world lives again; the *Universal Strike* has ended.

"No! turns on its Æolian hinge the gate!
Bursts forth into the blank the universe!
The winds are joyous round the mountain-tops;
The laughing sun plays with them. . . .

. . . . . .

We live. Life, while we live, is glad and gay
And sweet. Die when we may, most surely soon
Will come the consummation: we shall see
At last THE END within the hand of God."

This poem marks a distinct advance on any of its author's previous work. There is a dignity and majesty in the lines, and a maturity in the thought, for which we should look in vain in his earlier poems. In the conclusion in particular, we seem to catch a glimpse of the philosopher of twenty years later. Together with another composition (*Sleeping Beauty*) which belongs, in part at least, to the same year, *The Universal Strike* may perhaps not unfairly be said to represent Stirling in his best literary style.

Of *Sleeping Beauty*, Stirling says himself, in an Epilogue added to it in 1878, "I acknowledge myself to regard this writing as about my best," at the same time adding, "as respects thinking again, considerable correction would have followed" (had its author reproduced it in later years) of what "may only appear product of the heat and haste of youth." In both points of this judgment most critics would probably concur. If to a mature mind, the *motif* of *Sleeping Beauty*—the arraignment, so to speak, of the world of man for its apparent injustice, its inequalities, its high and low, and the passionate resolve to change all this, and to create a new and glorified universe—if this *motif* may appear young and immature, at least all must admire the remarkable beauty of the language in which it is embodied, and of the imagery with which it is adorned; all must appreciate the sympathy with the weak, the suffering, and the downtrodden which illumines it, and the love of the beautiful, the heroic, the sublime, which ennobles and exalts it. There are traces here of the Welsh experiences in the sympathetic, if perhaps somewhat highly coloured, pictures of the condition of the workers—especially of the miners, as represented by *Haiarno*, who toils day after day "chained in mountain-bowels—shut up with toads, and ravening rats, and dropping waters and exploding fire." It is Haiarno who

strikes, so to speak, the keynote of the overture to the piece :—

"'We lie all awry, twisted, contorted, crushing one another; and our eldest brother, Adler, with those, our brethren next to him, who have become his baser factors, flatterers, and followers, tread on us—but with a double hurt—to us first, but also to themselves. They bruise our head: we bruise their heel. O, mother, mother! why rear us up so numerous, and then die?'

"'Hush, Haiarno! our mother is not dead, but sleepeth.'"

Thus answers Ariel, who has "a tongue of fire, a brain of images, and a heart of dew." He will go forth and waken Beauty, his mother—their mother—the mother of Haiarno and the rest—and bring her back to dwell among her deserted children again. So he sets out; and his first joy as he finds himself alone with nature is thus beautifully described :—

"Boundless overhead stretched the blue heaven. The mountains rose before him *like an ecstasy*. The joy of solitude bubbled up within him. Exultation—inspiration—thrilled him like a presence. His cheek flushed; his eye lightened. He trode upon the winds—he gesticulated—he cried aloud in transport. Unutterable thought found vent in rhapsody. . . . The pebbles in his path, that looked so clear in the keen air, he threw with wild strength on and on before him, still following eagerly with speed to see what mystery they might chance to light on."

But by-and-by the ecstasy of the outsetting gives place to dejection and despondency, and voices of doubt and despair "swooped round him like an exulting, overtaking multitude." The whole face of the universe is changed.

"Coldly stretched the firmament above his head in blank monotony, nor showed one sign of sympathy. He heard a lifeless rivulet purl on. He saw the wide, bare heath, and the *unmeaning sun*. Then Ariel stood upon his feet and shrieked into the air: 'Father! Father! am I thy son?' . . . *Silence, like an upstartled hound, skulked sulkily to its place again.*"

It is impossible to quote here all the fine literary touches in this beautiful piece; but one or two points cannot be passed over without mention—the beauty of the passage in which Ariel is described as catching a glimpse of the fringes of the mantle of Beauty, his mother, and of pursuing in passionate haste; and the characterization of those others whom he meets engaged on a similar quest to his own. The old man "with stately, self-complacent pride of aspect," and "voice musical, of serious ecstatic tone, rising on a swell of simple yet somewhat stately melody," is of course Wordsworth. The fair boy sitting before the "wondrous forms"—"enormous bulks of heroes," "images of man, and beast, and mighty god"—could only be the marvellous author of *Hyperion;* while the "slender youth," "drooping from a little skiff," "emaciated and grey," "with such a face of sorrow," is none other than Shelley.

When we consider that this piece, along with *The Universal Strike*, *The Novelist and the Milliner*, the *Novel Blowers*, and one or two smaller pieces, was the work, during one year, of the leisure hours of a young doctor in active practice, it will readily be admitted that the year 1845 was indeed a memorable one in the life of the author.

CHAPTER VI

1846-1851

Professional Work—*Letters on Carlyle*—Epidemic of Cholera—Stirling's Treatment of it—*The Common-sense of Cholera*

Few young doctors have probably ever had so heavy a responsibility laid upon them as that with which Stirling found himself confronted when, in 1846, he became sole surgeon to the Hirwain iron-works. In the works, where hundreds of workers were employed in various ways, and machinery of all sorts was in use, accidents were of course of frequent occurrence; and in dealing with the sufferers, Stirling could look for help to absolutely no one. There was no hospital, provided with appliances and instruments for surgical operations, to which the injured could be conveyed; there was no doctor within miles whom he could summon to his assistance. In every emergency he had to rely on his own resources; and often he had to make up, by ingenious contrivances of his own, for the lack of the usual instruments or appliances which were not at hand in the Welsh valley. On one occasion, through some accident in the works, a man had his hip-joint dislocated. In a modern, well-equipped hospital, which would doubtless contain a special instrument for the purpose, the replacement of the joint might not be regarded as a serious matter; but Stirling was without help, either human or mechanical, and, as will readily be understood, even of mere physical strength, more was required for the operation than he possessed. By means of a rope and a heavy piece of furniture, in the dingy little room in which the injured man

lay, he contrived a sort of pulley, and instructed a neighbour to pull the rope at a given signal, while he himself, his hands on the patient's limb, directed the force of the improvised machinery. This ingenious contrivance proved successful!

Of course, accidents in the works were far from being the only emergencies which, as the only doctor for many miles round, Stirling had to meet unaided. One of the multifarious duties of the young surgeon was to relieve the sufferings of toothache by removing the cause. For this purpose he possessed an instrument of torture called a key, on his skill in the use of which he particularly prided himself; and in later years he was very pleased if any member of his family would give him an opportunity of once more exhibiting it. "Toothache?" he would exclaim, in a tone that sounded to the sufferer offensively cheerful. "Have it out!" And before you knew where you were, you were seated on the floor in the "study," with the operator on a chair at your back, fixing the instrument of torture on the offending tooth. Then there was a delicate turn of the wrist on the part of the operator, an awful crash on the part of the patient; and the tooth was triumphantly exhibited to the latter in the iron jaws of the "key," instead of in his own. It was very skilfully and cleverly done; but the next time you had toothache, you took care not to mention the fact in the presence of the head of the house!

Possibly Stirling's Welsh patients were more Spartan than his later domestic ones; for it is a fact that, when it was known that he was leaving the iron valley, people from miles round, even though not suffering from toothache, came to him to have decayed teeth removed, in the fear that his successor might not be such a skilful extractor! It must be admitted, however, that his reputation as an extractor was sometimes won by methods which

cannot unfairly be called theatrical! On one occasion, he had mounted his horse, and was about to set out on his morning round of visits, when he was accosted by an old man, with his hand to his mouth, uttering cries of pain mingled with, "Doctor, doctor!" Unwilling to dismount and return to the surgery, Stirling stooped from the saddle, and felt the offending tooth, which was somewhat loose. "Have you a handkerchief?" he said to the man (in Welsh); then, with the square of coloured cotton the other handed to him, he took a firm hold of the tooth, and lightly pressed his horse's sides with his spurs. The next instant the surgeon was some yards off, riding cheerfully on his way, the tooth lay on the ground in the red bandanna, and the patient was left standing, lifting up his hands and his voice in awe and wonder at the magical feat which had been performed!

It must not be supposed that Stirling usually took his "cases" as lightly as the one mentioned above; the truth is that his responsibility usually lay very heavily on him. He has often been heard to tell of his agony of mind during an epidemic of a peculiarly severe form of scarlet fever, against which he found all the known remedies almost powerless; and how, when he saw the funeral procession of one of the victims approaching, he would take shelter behind a wall, or anywhere out of sight of it!

It will be remembered that the year when Stirling began practice in Hirwain was that of the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, when hundreds of people were starving. The bad season which caused famine in Ireland was not without its evil consequences in Wales also. For several springs following it, the inhabitants of the iron valley were, many of them, in a condition of scurvy—"actual sea-scurvy, not a scaly skin merely, but black, hard, crippling swellings on each leg, terminating in

ulcers, blue, swollen fungus gums surrounding loose teeth, pallor and prostration, and hæmorrhage from every outlet." The ordinary table vegetables being almost unprocurable at the time, and lime juice hardly to be had in sufficient quantities, Stirling used to order the sufferers from this unpleasant malady to gather nettles, and have them boiled, and eat the water they were boiled in like soup.

In spite of its anxieties and responsibilities, Stirling's life in Wales was not without its pleasures. He was young and healthy; it was a joy to him to come out in the bright, fresh morning, "throw his leg across his horse," and set out on his rounds, which often took him along rough bridle-paths, up among the hills, where he was alone with nature, and free to think his own thoughts, and dream his dreams. The absence of good roads, and the consequent necessity of employing the horse-and-saddle as a means of locomotion, were reckoned by him as among the advantages of his position in Wales.

In 1849 he received the appointment to a practice in the Vale of Neath, where he remained till 1851. It must have been while living in the Vale of Neath that he wrote his three *Letters on Carlyle*, which appeared in a now defunct magazine, *The Truth-Seeker*, under the pseudonym of "Caliban." The "letters" are written ostensibly in reply to a friend who has ventured to express a somewhat unfavourable opinion of the Chelsea Sage—chiefly on account of his "style"—and they constitute a passionate defence, or, rather, a glowing eulogy, of the man who was still, to the writer of the letters, prophet and master. Reading the letters now—in these coldly critical, or apathetically indifferent, days—one is startled by the boldness, no less than by the generous warmth, of the praise bestowed on Carlyle. The writer seems unable to find words strong enough, or ardent enough, to express his admiration

of, his sense of gratitude to, the author of *Sartor* and the rest. Take, for instance, this passage from the second *Letter*:—

"I tell you that there is here once more a man of the highest order—a man whose intellect has seized all the meaning of the past, and all the meaning of the present—a man who, in things admitted and allowed, has manifested and made evident to all a faculty of such rare truth and trenchancy of stroke as compels a credence to him in things remoter—a man of the most overflooding and overwhelming honesty—a man of the fiercest, keenest indignation against wrong and injustice . . . I tell you, you *must* believe in him . . for just as sure as there is a sun in heaven, such a man as this *can* only be, must be, and is, a Messenger from the unseen Father to the erring and rebellious children."

Or this from *Letter III.*:—

"That Carlyle does possess this super-eminent importance as a writer, I think a brief glance at those six pamphlets[1] alone will go far to establish. You have called him a negation only; but, reflect! is he then no more than that? . . . Is his rationale of the confusion of 1848, revealing, as it does, its essential nature to the very core, negative only? Is the organization of purposeless pauperism into effective industrialism negative only? . . . Is his doctrine of Chastisement negative only? Colonial Policy, Socialism, Education, the Church, Commercialism, the Press, Parliaments, Nobles, Freemen, Kings—here surely are some of the most important topics that man or men can think of now . . . in regard to which of these topics have we not gained from Carlyle the clearest and most positive insight?"

Elsewhere, in the *Letters*, Carlyle is spoken of as "the master," the "Norse Prophet," as "in reality our beginning, our middle, and our end." Any author might well be satisfied to meet with *one* disciple so able, so sympathetic and so admiring as the writer of those *Letters!*

Stirling's own copy of the *Letters* affords

[1] *Latter-day Pamphlets.* The third of the *Letters on Carlyle* appeared in September 1850—the year of the publication of the *Latter-day Pamphlets.*

evidence that, at a much later period, he endorsed the estimate of Carlyle given in them. Beneath the signature "Caliban" of the last letter there is written in the writer's own hand, "Bravo! 1865." Beneath these words again, in writing that suggests a period forty years later (probably one of the early years of the present century), he has added: "After a life-time it is only the true thing to say that, even then as he wrote, not one word Messiah-wards was ever for a moment a matter of denial by the writer."

While he was writing the *Letters*, Stirling was still occupied with his professional duties; and in the year in which they were published, he was confronted by circumstances which called upon all his resources, physical as well as intellectual. It was in that year (1850) that South Wales was visited by an epidemic of cholera of a virulent order; and, as the sole doctor for miles round, he had to combat it single-handed. It was a terrible time; and the young doctor was kept so busy, as one after another of the people in his charge was seized with the awful malady, that he could hardly get the necessary bodily rest himself. To allay the panic which the fear of infection at first excited, he took his young wife (he had recently been married) to a cottage where a sufferer had been left deserted; and she even helped to rub the cramped sinews in arms and legs, which constitute one of the most painful symptoms of the disease. The object-lesson had its good results; even the Welsh miners had sense enough to know that the doctor would not take his beautiful young wife into the presence of the malady, if he feared infection; and in future the sufferers were not deserted.

One incident of the cholera epidemic, related by Mrs Stirling, may perhaps be found interesting in these days when we hear so much of the power of lactic acid. An old woman, who lived alone, being

seized with the prevailing malady, shut herself up in her hut, refusing to see a doctor, and treated herself with copious draughts of butter-milk, which —so she said—effected a complete cure! It is true at least that she did not die at the time of the epidemic, but whether or not hers was a case of genuine cholera must remain uncertain.

It is very gratifying to know that Stirling's unsparing and intelligent exertions in combating the terrible epidemic were rewarded with remarkable success, and received due recognition. While, in the district next to his, hardly a single person survived who was attacked by the malady, of his own patients by far the largest number recovered—all, in fact, to whom he had been called at a sufficiently early stage of the disease; and when the epidemic had passed, the Board of Health awarded him a special vote of thanks for his successful treatment of it. Some four years later he published a little pamphlet (long since out of print), entitled *The Common-sense of Cholera*, which is, in many ways, surely the most remarkable *medical* treatise ever written! It is remarkable not only for the literary style, unusual in medical works, in which it is written; not only for the tone of authority, strange in an author who signs himself only *A Practical Practitioner;* but perhaps most of all for the evidences throughout of *the philosophic mind*—the mind that goes to the root of the question, that grasps its subject, as he would himself have said at a later day, in its *concreteness*, not *abstractly*. The pamphlet, as has been said, being out of print, perhaps an extract or two, illustrative of what has been said, may not be out of place :—

"Well, will voluminous reports, eloquent perorations—mere self-satisfied beatings of one's own drum—suffice to extirpate cholera while large masses of the community are to be found dragging on existence in such a condition of bodily—and, if of bodily, surely then also of spiritual—

disorganization and dissolution? And that such is the case, not in trope but in truth, our own personal experience of the Welsh workmen and the Irish navvies amply establishes. Nay, to leave the workmen, does the Board of Health expect that such measures will extirpate cholera, while the very masters are permitted to exist in the condition in which they are but too generally found? For the pimpled wine-skin, the coarse vulgarity of tongue, the profuse polygamy, the blown arrogance, the insolent emptiness that all of us have met, is it but an exceptional disguisement, then, or a natural and inevitable transformation? What single noble object is in all that mighty traffic? . . . Masters—men of perseverance, men of skill, to lead numbers of their fellows in some noble industry—such masters are they? No; knowing but one principle—to get the most for the least—and driven by that principle, however rich they be, however eminent they be, into the most systematic adulteration of every article they deal in, from pipe-clay and shoe-blacking up to vast railways and huge bridges, they are but too commonly, even as the men they drain, morally and bodily, wrecks. Master and man, then, in such condition, is it by polite inspectors and conventional Blue books that the Board of Health will extirpate cholera? Never. We call, then, to you, the separate and individual members of the Board of Health, to bethink and bestir yourselves; to understand fully the whole scope of your function, and to do what in you lies to accomplish it. Extensions of power, additions of power, no doubt require to be demanded: demand them: to that your duty imperatively bids you. To you by the great British nation is a mighty function delegated: to the great British nation you are a Board of Health: be then a board of health, and give us health!"

There is more in the same vein which might be quoted, but perhaps the above extract is enough to confirm what has been said above regarding the tone of authority in which this unknown Practical Practitioner writes. Since the days when it was said of the Greatest who ever walked this earth that "He spake as one having authority," there has been no surer mark vouchsafed to us of the bearer of a message than this very tone of authority—when it rings true, as it undoubtedly does in this little

medical treatise, and in its author's later works. As yet, of course, Stirling's message had not become explicit to himself; but those who are familiar with his philosophical writings will find it implicit—in part at least—in the following extract from *Cholera*:—

"It has come out of late, however, and there are certain statistics to prove, that not the animal and sensual conditions only, but also the moral and intellectual are necessary to the procurement of health and the certioration of longevity. Our model man, therefore, shall know that skin, stomach, lung, that nerve, muscle, sense alone suffice not, but, to the magic circle which should round existence, the heart, the mind, the soul, are necessary. For the heart, then, he shall find the aliment of the affections. He shall know the richness, the fullness of life secured to a man by a good wife and loving children. He shall have a friend, too, or friends, and know the clear deliverance of a full communion. He shall have sweetened himself by charity; he shall have meekened himself by resignation; he shall have calmed, cleared, confirmed himself by love—by forgiveness, not of the big malices alone, but of all the petty spites and slights that barb existence. Neither shall the due aliment, the due vital conditions of the mind be wanting. He shall search, and think, and speculate; for the heavens are questions to him, and the earth and man. He shall widen and illuminate his intellect by the knowledge of his times. He shall purify and fortify the God within him by the study and imitation of the wise, and good, and great, who have gone before him. He shall be religious, too: for as affection to the heart, and its own exertion to the mind, so to the soul, which is the inmost entity, the depth of depths, religion—religion which is the sum of all, the flower, the crowning, ultimate, and essential fruit, to which the rest are but as root, and stem, and branches. . . . He shall have made plain to himself the probationary—and even, perhaps, the pictorial—condition of this world, the certainty of a God, the necessity of a future existence, and, thus inspirited and inspired, his whole life shall be a peaceful evolution of duty. He may have fed upon the scepticism of his times; but he shall have healthily assimilated it. He shall have recognized the *thinness of its negation*, the pretension of

its pedantry, the insufficiency of its material hypotheses; and the great mystic, spiritual truths shall shine out to him, even as to them of old, undimmed, unveiled, unremoved by any of them."

Surely this is a remarkable passage to be found in a little pamphlet treating of a special malady! To those who are familiar with Stirling's later writings, that phrase "thinness of its negation" in this treatise of the young doctor must appear curiously characteristic of the future philosopher. Already he had caught a glimpse of the foe, so to speak, in combating which he was, later, to spend so much of his thought and energy; but he had not yet learned to name it *Aufklärung*. The passage is characteristic, too, as was said above, in its *concrete* treatment of the subject under discussion. The subject is, as we know, cholera. One writer would have given a learned disquisition on the cholera bacillus, with diagrams taken under the microscope; another would, perhaps, have denounced the insanitary physical conditions which had given rise to the malady, and suggested improvements; a third would have contented himself with describing with minute accuracy the various phases of the disease; a fourth might have related his own experience, and treatment, of a case; while the Faith Healer, from *his* abstract standpoint, would have declared the others were all wrong in dealing with disease as if it were a bodily thing—that it was the mind of the patient which must be addressed through "suggestion." But Stirling was a philosopher as well as a practical physician; and he did not deal in abstractions; he looks at his subject from all the points of view indicated above, except, perhaps, the first. To him a patient was more than a "case"—more than liver, and stomach, and lungs, and heart—he was that highly complex thing, a human being, a member of that still more complex thing, a human community.

This distinction of *abstract* and *concrete* is one very frequent in Stirling's philosophical writings; and his readers must be familiar with his condemnations of merely abstract, or *formal*, right, and the merely abstract individual—that is, the person who looks at a question of right or justice *in abstraction*, apart from the concrete facts, circumstances, elements, which condition it. "So it is," he says in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Law*, "that we find the individual who only fixes himself in his *right* for the most part so thin and narrow. We see also that it is generally the rude and unformed man who so stubborns himself in his abstract right, while the richer, fuller nature has an eye for every side of the interest at stake, and has no difficulty in complete resignation of his abstract right." It is in the same *Lecture* from which this sentence is quoted that there occurs the following illustration of abstract right, and an abstract individual, which will make the distinction clearer than any amount of explanation:—

"I recollect of a case, indeed, where a poor man nearly ruined himself by the consistency of his faith in formal or abstract right. He was the landlord of a workshop; and the tenant, without consent asked or given, took it upon him to enlarge the old windows in this workshop, and open new ones. 'The workshop is mine,' said the landlord, 'and you have infringed my rights.' 'But what I have done,' said the tenant, 'I have done at my own expense; and what I have done is an improvement to the property.' 'I admit that,' said the landlord, 'but you had no right to make alterations in *my* property without *my* consent, and I will take you to law there*for*.' Accordingly, this landlord did take this tenant to law; he lost his case before judge after judge; and he was just on the point of taking it to the House of Lords, when death kindly stepped in; and by *its* abstraction did justice to *his*."

This distinction of abstract and concrete had not become explicit to Stirling at the time of writing the *Cholera* pamphlet; but that he had himself

reached concreteness—the result of experience—is obvious from the pamphlet itself. The little medical treatise, in fact, marks another stage in the intellectual development of the future philosopher, which it is part of the object of this memoir to trace. He is now on a totally different, and much higher, plane than the young man who wrote to Carlyle that he was afraid of "medicine strangling literature." That young man was still *abstract*, lopsided. He possessed, it is true, "a real power of Vorstellung," which is, as we have seen, "the key to mental power"; but that power was only as yet "formal"—it was without "filling," as Stirling would himself have said.

Thus is the wisdom of Carlyle's advice to "keep by medicine" vindicated. Stirling has kept by medicine; and through it has been brought in contact with the great realities of life and death—through it, he has obtained his "filling," and attained to concreteness. He is now a man *teres totus atque rotundus*.

CHAPTER VII

1851—1857

Death of Stirling's Father—Paris—The *Coup d'état*—Life in France—Letter from Carlyle—*Burns in Drama*—Heidelberg—Hegel

To fit him for the life-work which awaited him, what the future philosopher at this period required was leisure to enable him to devote himself to a special and profound course of study. Nature had given him the necessary mental power; in Glasgow University he had obtained the requisite general intellectual training; in Wales, through his contact with his fellow-creatures, and his struggles with suffering and disease, he had acquired that without which mere intellectual power is practically valueless—namely, *substance*, concreteness. All that he now required was an accurate knowledge of German, and a close study of philosophy—especially the philosophy of Hegel. Just at the psychological moment, the means to secure the necessary leisure were put within his reach. On the 14th March 1851 his father died in his seventy-fourth year, leaving what in those days was regarded as a considerable fortune.

Besides the future philosopher, only one son and the sole daughter survived their father; and as no will was found, the estate was, by general agreement, divided equally between the three, except that the daughter received, in addition to a third of the money, the house and furniture.

Even perhaps in 1851, certainly in these present days of luxurious living, few men would have regarded the modest patrimony, of which Stirling

now found himself in possession, sufficient to retire upon; but the future philosopher had no ambition to make a showy figure in society, and the sum which he had inherited appeared to him enough to maintain him and his family in comfort and independence, while he devoted himself to intellectual work. Accordingly, in the summer following his father's death, he resigned his appointment as surgeon, and resolved to spend some years on the Continent, with the object, partly, of making himself familiar with French and German. Not yet had he definitely resolved to devote himself to German philosophy, though he had already, as he tells us in the Preface to the second edition of the *Secret*, seen the name of Hegel in a review, and been "somehow very peculiarly impressed by it." Nevertheless, as he left his native country for the Continent, he was unconsciously obeying the call of his destiny—unconsciously moving towards the discovery of his life-work, though some years were even yet to pass before he reached it.

That he had not yet reached it is proved by the fact that his destination, in the first place, was not Germany, but France. After a brief stay at Boulogne, he and his wife settled in a furnished *appartement* at 41 Vieille Route de Neuilly, Paris, where they remained for some eighteen months.

It was at a critical period in the history of France that the future philosopher and his wife took up their abode in the capital. Little more than three years before (in February 1848) the king, Louis-Philippe, had been driven from the throne by a revolution—the third in less than sixty years!—and France had again become a republic, with Louis Napoleon, nephew of the great Bonaparte, as its President. During the three years of its existence the Government had not proved entirely satisfactory; there was constant friction between the President and the Assembly, and

about the time when Stirling arrived in Paris, it was becoming evident that a change of some sort must take place. Before the end of the year 1851, the change took place with startling suddenness; and the future philosopher had an opportunity of witnessing history in the making. Sudden though the change appeared to be to outsiders, it had been preparing for some time back. For some time Louis Napoleon, in council with a small group of friends and supporters, had been planning the *coup d'état* by which he was to crush those who opposed him, and raise himself to the position of ruler of France. On the 2nd December the stroke fell; and in a letter to his brother some three days later, Stirling gives a vivid account of what he himself saw in Paris. Here is the letter:—

"41 Vieille Route de Neuilly, Paris,
Friday, Dec. 5, 1851.

"My dear Brother,—Yours dated the day of our new *coup d'état* reached me duly yesterday; and I have waited till to-night to have more news for you.

"As I went in the omnibus on Tuesday the 2nd on my way to the schools,[1] I was struck by seeing groups round placards, and then, in crossing the Place de la Concorde, I was surprised to find it covered by troops. Then our omnibus was not allowed its usual route over the Pont de la Concorde, but had to turn and go over the Pont des Invalides; and then I observed the steps of the façade of the Chamber of Deputies covered with soldiers. All this, and the excited aspect of the streets, made me see something was up; and I thought to myself the likeliest thing would be that Louis Napoleon had just turned the

[1] He was attending lectures at the Sorbonne and the Collége de France.

Assembly out. So it was. When I got down from the omnibus, I had the opportunity of reading his proclamations to the people and to the soldiers, my internal comments on which I shall not write here. I found the lecture I wanted to hear put off; so I made my way down the Place Concorde again. I crossed the bridge next (on the Tuileries side) to the Pont de la Concorde; and when the soldier sentrying it there allowed me, I had an opportunity of seeing the troops by the Chamber of Deputies, and how that building was made fairly inaccessible by troops barring every avenue. I went along the river side to the Place de la Concorde; and had an opportunity of enjoying the excitement of the people. The affair was really a kind of a god-send, for it brought out again all the beautiful forms and faces that the bad weather had so long deprived us of. There they were, smiling and chatting, all in a state of exhilaration that I had to participate in. It looked like a piece of fun; and they seemed to make it quite a piece of fun by experimenting on the ways which were barred, and those which were not. '*Peut on passer par ici?—Hé bien! par là, donc!*' Then the troops with their arms piled, etc., etc., and on such a place as the Place Concorde it was really very fine.

"By-and by, I was told of the long list of great men who were arrested;[1] but that I *would* not believe. Next day, Wednesday, I walked in pretty early to the Boulevards: everywhere groups, everywhere sergents-de-ville, everywhere soldiers. At the foot of the Faubourg Poissonnière there was a considerable crowd which, in spite of exhortations from individuals, '*Ne courez donc pas!*' did run from some sergents-de-ville on the pavement, and some soldiers on the causeway. I had put my back to one of the urinals (you know), and as the sergents

[1] The members of the Opposition in the Assembly, who actually *were* arrested in their beds by the orders of Louis Napoleon.

came up, I walked across the cleared space without anyone speaking to me. Presently, however, I found a fair *cordon* of soldiers across the Boulevard, and had to make a circuit by some other streets to gain the Boulevard further on. I passed the Porte St Denis, went on to the Porte St Martin, the street of which name I descended, turning into the Rue Rambuteau towards the Pointe St Eustache, the Rue St Honoré, the Place du Carrousel, and eventually home by the Palais Royal, the Rue Vivienne, and the Boulevard again.

"Yesterday, Thursday, I was on the Boulevard as far as I could get—which was only to the Rue de la Michodière, just by the beginning (I think) of the B. des Italiens. There, at a very little distance from me, I saw the soldiers firing into the houses; and then the lancers would charge every now and then, the officers brandishing their swords at us,[1] till we cut round the corner for a bit, to come back as they went back. This was too close, though, and very foolish, for if any insurgent had been among us, and had fired upon the soldiers, we should all have been fired and ridden upon without mercy.

"To-day at first I thought matters worse: I could find no omnibus, and the shops by the barriers were shut up, the streets looking, and sounding, very melancholy and deserted. I met some wounded being carried to the hospital, too, which was a sickener. As I went on, however, I saw the proclamation, '*L'émeute est comprimée dans la Capitale*,' etc., and felt well pleased. The first house I called at, I found all the members of a family assembled in panic: several shots had come through their windows. I afterwards walked the whole Boulevard from the Madeleine nearly to the Bastille, except when stopped; and had the pleasure of seeing the barricades, and the damage

[1] A small group of curious spectators, eager to see as much as possible, of whom Stirling was one.

of the shot. An immense number of windows were pierced with bullets: many had hardly an inch of glass. The very Byron Tavern had two bullets in its front, which had been fired down from the Boulevard. On the Boulevard Poissonière there were two houses — a *magasin* of carpets, and another of shawls—riddled by bullets, and even *shattered into chasms by cannon balls.* Think of them taking cannons into the Trongate, and firing them at the opposite houses! ! ! !

"From the Boulevard I went and saw all the barricades and shot marks in the Rue Rambuteau, and by the Pointe St Eustache.

"There have been a great many deaths, etc.—*not* among the soldiers. I saw steps of doors beastly with blood. I have heard of a group of twenty *spectators* on the Boulevard—just on the other side of the troop of soldiers from where I was myself—being fired on, and only two escaping. Several English have been killed in that way. The best-known English chemist here [was] killed by a bullet through the thigh, which cut the great artery. He lies a corpse—was discovered almost accidentally—and his wife, poor woman, does not yet know it—as yet she is only told that he is wounded. So for the present this is the end—for the present—only for the present! I need not comment on what has led to this—your English papers will do that—but I feel a great deal very acutely. Thank God! Such things, on one side or the other, are quite impossible in England. I have left myself no room to notice the points in your last, but write me soon—and so I shall write you soon again. I have only room to say,—Your affectionate brother,

"JAMES."

Like the writer of this letter, when we read his description of the state of things in Paris, during

those three days of the famous *coup d'état*, we "feel a great deal very acutely." It affords much food for reflection. Such striking contrasts! The "beautiful forms and faces," that have come out again after the bad weather, "smiling and chatting, in a state of exhilaration," and jestingly trying the various barriers; and the troops charging handfuls of spectators; the houses of innocent citizens riddled with shot, and "even shattered into chasms by cannon balls"; the wounded being carried to hospitals; the door-steps "beastly with blood"! And all because one ambitious man desired to make himself ruler of France! Perhaps what is strangest of all is that he should have succeeded, and that the throne, set up, as it were, in the blood of innocent people, should have remained secure for nearly twenty years.

Probably few outsiders in Paris at the time saw as much, during those three days, as Stirling did, for fear no doubt kept most people within doors; and the accounts of what took place which reached the outer world through the Press, were most likely neither so truthful nor so circumstantial as that given above. The letter was preserved by Stirling's brother, and, on his death, some six years later, returned to the hands of its writer, by whom it was, in 1863, lent for perusal to the historian of the Crimean War.

Mr Kinglake, in a letter to Stirling, expressed deep interest in his account of "the day of blood," and regret that it had reached him too late for him to be able to make use of it in the fourth edition of his *History*.

After those three days, things settled down in Paris, and the citizens once more went about their work or their pleasure with their old zest. Stirling resumed his studies, and his attendance at lectures at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France. In some cases—perhaps in most—his attendance was

due, not to any interest in the subject of the lecture, but to his desire to accustom his ear to the language. He also took lessons in the pronunciation of French from M. Duquenois, a distinguished master of elocution, with the result that, as he wrote many years later in a letter to his friend, Dr Ingleby, "I have travelled a week in France as a Frenchman with only one detection, and the delighted '*J'y suis!*' of the detector was a sufficient compliment."

Many years afterwards, when Stirling had written his great work, and become a famous philosopher, a friend once remarked that the pronunciation of French was with him "a fine art." Some of his family can still recall their sufferings under his conscientious, if not too patient, instructions in the art—for he would never allow them to be taught French by anyone but himself. The tedium of those weary iterations and reiterations of vowels and diphthongs and gutturals—of *e* and *é* and *è* and *ê*; of *eu* and *u*; of *an* and *in* and *on* and *un*—under the keen, watchful eyes of the instructor, and the sense of your own hopeless stupidity with which you were somehow overwhelmed if you did not succeed in satisfying the sharp, listening ears with the exact *nuances*—are things not likely soon to be forgotten by those who experienced them.

After a year and a half spent in Paris, Stirling and his wife removed to St Servan, near St Malo, where they lived some three years and a half, and where two of their children were born. St Servan is now, one hears, a decayed little place, left high and dry by the tide of fashion, which yearly washes the coast at Dinard and Paramé and other places in the neighbourhood; but fifty-five years ago it seems to have been, in its way, quite a gay little town, with a resident population of some three hundred English, an English church and clergyman, and a club. The English residents were mostly younger branches of good families, who had settled

in the little town for reasons of economy; and they formed quite a pleasant little society, exchanging civilities in an unpretentious and inexpensive way.

In this little out-of-the-way French town, the lives of the future philosopher and his wife flowed on in a quiet, pleasant routine. They had rented a house, with a large garden, well stocked with fruit trees of all sorts; and the place being situated on the coast, Stirling was able to indulge his love of boating, and acquired a small sailing-boat, which he could manage without help. His mornings were given to study, his afternoons to his boat, his evenings usually, along with his wife, to the simple social intercourse of the place. Life in St Servan was so pleasant and happy that he grudged even the shortest break in it; and during a brief visit to his native country, in 1854, on business matters, we find him writing to his wife, after only a few days' absence from home, that he is "always earnestly longing to be in my only true nest again." In the same letter he bids her "take great care of yourself, for you are beyond all doubt the most valuable life of the whole of us. Live well, and take a grain of quinine three times a day."

It was in 1854 that the following letter from Carlyle was received—in acknowledgment, evidently, of the pamphlet on *Cholera*, mentioned in the previous chapter, which Stirling must have sent to him. In the letter there is an allusion to a meeting, of which no mention has been found elsewhere; but it is only natural to suppose that Stirling would seek a meeting with the author for whom he had such admiration and reverence, and that Carlyle would readily accord it to the writer of the *Letters* in *The Truth-Seeker*.

Letter from THOMAS CARLYLE.

"CHELSEA, LONDON,
18th January 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have read your little essay

on *Cholera;* and find it a very superior piece indeed. Lucid, ingenious, deep and true; everywhere intelligible, everywhere credible to me: it is by far the best account I ever got of that strange and haggard phenomenon; concerning which, indeed, a good deal of important nonsense has been uttered in this world, and 'common sense,' I fear, has been much of a rarity. Your little pamphlet abounds, moreover, in fine and good ideas that are not strictly of a technical nature at all; and everywhere there come reflexes and irradiations from a general system of thought, philosophical as well as medical, which I much approve of, and which greatly distinguish you on such an occasion. You will do well, as leisure may be offered you, or *possibility* may be offered, to elaborate those notices, and set them forth, in practical application, to the view of the medical and general public. Too widely circulated, too thoroughly believed, they cannot be, at present. The real Physician, I believe — were there but such an animal discoverable—is the real Moralist withal of these epochs. How often have I reflected on that bit of old Teutonic Etymology, that 'Healthy' is, in origin, identical with 'Holy.' *Gott der Heilige* (God the Holy) signifies precisely God the *Healthy* too—and ought ever so to signify, far as we have deviated, and sadly (into bottomless abominable quagmires and cloacas) since that true epoch! Do not neglect your word in season, if the opportunity is given you.

"I have been in many humours, and in many places, ideal and real, since the time I saw you here! You also appear to have had your changes: I wish you had spent a word or two in explaining to me what combination of winds and tides had drifted you into the harbour of St Malo, and what you are specially doing there. I could guess: some

body of English Industrials to whom an English Doctor had seemed necessary? Some years ago, I was one day at your old quarters, Merthyr Tydvil: a place never to be forgotten when once seen. The bleakest place *above* ground; I suppose, the *non-plus-ultra* of Industrialism, wholly mammonish, given up to shopkeeper supply-and-demand;—presided over by sooty Darkness, physical and spiritual, by Beer, Methodism, and the Devil, to a lamentable and supreme extent!—I have no more time, nor any more paper.—I remain always yours truly, T. CARLYLE."

If this letter is not to be compared with the letter of 1842, given above, either in literary expression or in the wisdom of its substance, it must be admitted to be thoroughly characteristic of its writer. It shows him, too, in a kindly and friendly aspect.

Besides the *Cholera* pamphlet, which was probably written there, the only literary work of Stirling's belonging to the St Servan period is his *Burns in Drama*, which was begun in 1855, but not completed till many years later. This piece is not to be taken as a drama in any technical sense, but, as the author says in his preface, is "merely intended as a study of character." It consists of a series of pictures of the events and circumstances which contributed to mould the character of the poet—the troubles of his early home, the types of people with whom he was surrounded, the ebullitions of his youthful passions and their consequences, his disgrace and despair, his brief period of glory in Edinburgh as the lion of the hour, and his last years of disappointment and bitterness. A well-known writer and critic,[1] writing to Stirling at the time of the publication of the piece, says: "*Burns in Drama* is, beyond question and opinion, masterly—

[1] George Cupples, author of the famous sea novel, *The Green Hand.*

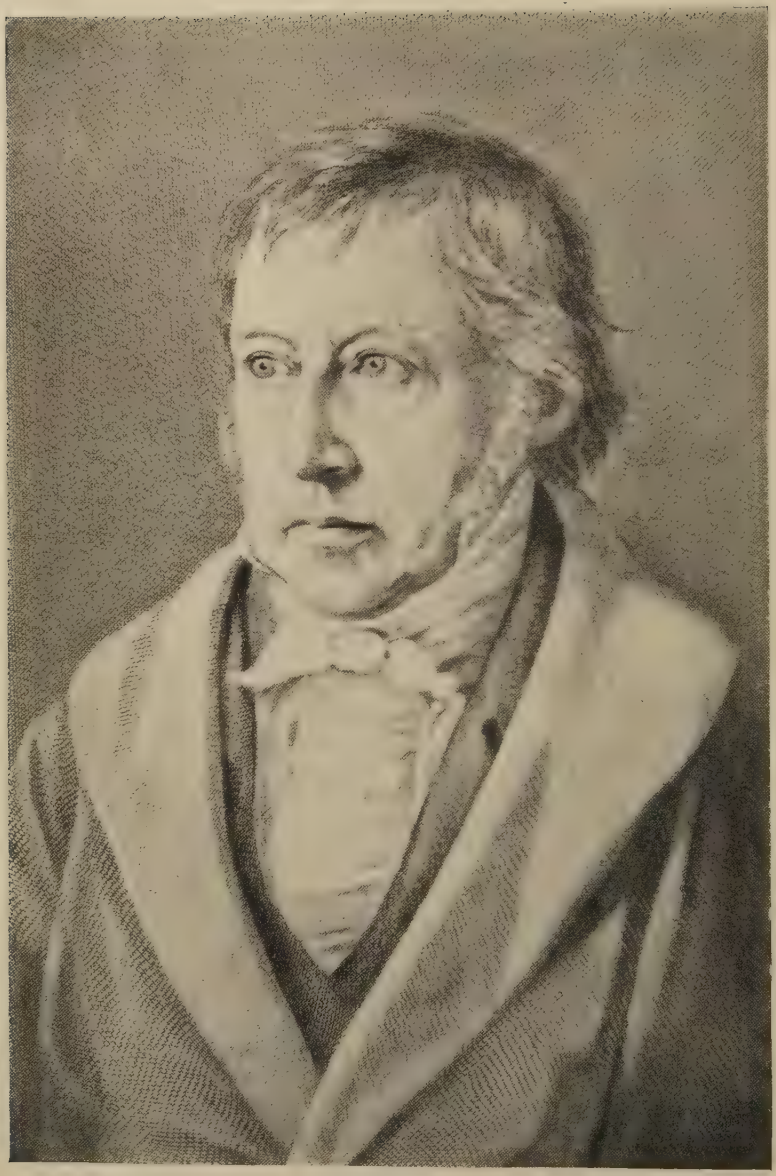
a first-rate piece of work. It is thorough poetical representation—sets the man there—enters into him and all his surroundings. Wilson, to my mind, is better than Carlyle on the subject. But you do, I think, in far less space and few words, what he does with much oratory—and, besides that, you give what no one else has given, to *me* at all events: you reproduce and represent, and also give touches that are absolutely clairvoyant. In Burns's case these have a peculiar value, for to understand and appreciate him, personality is *first*, indispensable, essential."

Another critic about the same time writes: "You have restored to us the very personality of the man" (Burns).[1]

The desire to make himself familiar with German, led to the resolve, on Stirling's part, to stay for a while in Germany. Accordingly, in the summer of 1856, he and Mrs Stirling, accompanied by two young children and a French nurse, left St Servan, and set out for Heidelberg. In Heidelberg they rented a furnished *appartement*, which they occupied for a year—one of the happiest in their lives. They had few, if any, acquaintances in the little German town; but they were together, they were young and healthy, with little to trouble them; the weather was mostly good, the scenery was beautiful; and in the afternoons or early evenings, when Stirling had put aside his books, they would go on expeditions into the surrounding country — generally on foot — ending up with a simple meal in some quiet little inn at the limit of the excursion.

It was in Heidelberg that Stirling seems to have settled down to what was to be the real business of his life—the assimilation and interpretation of the

[1] Stirling's own opinion of the *Burns* is seen from a sentence in a letter to Mr Hale-White (author of *Mark Rutherford*), dated March 31, 1884: "The *Burns* is quite the BEST," he writes,—"*mature* too."



HEGEL.

(From photo by Bonn, Edin.)

To face p. 115.

philosophy of Hegel—though nine years of laborious thought and study were yet to be gone through before the appearance of the fruit of his toil. Even before going to Germany he had, as was said above, been attracted to Hegel.

"As for Hegel, it was somewhat strange that, seeing the name—while still at home and without even a dream of Germany—with surprise, for the first time, in a Review, I was somehow very peculiarly impressed by it. But the special magic lay for me in this that, supping with two students of German before I was in German as deep as they, I heard this Hegel talked of with awe as, by universal repute, the deepest of all philosophers, but as equally also the darkest. The one had been asked to translate bits of him for the Press; and the other had come to the conclusion that there was something beyond usual remarkable in him: it was understood that he had not only completed philosophy; but, above all, reconciled to philosophy Christianity itself. *That struck.*"

We see from this passage that what attracted Stirling to the study of Hegel was, partly, the reputed difficulty of the enterprise, and especially the fact that the German philosopher was supposed to overthrow the scepticism of the times, with its "thin negative," and restore to us our Christian faith by revealing the philosophical foundations on which it rests. As regards the difficulty of the subject, the remark of the distinguished philosophical writer and teacher, Professor Ferrier, seems to express the experience of most, if not all, who approached it previous to the publication of the *Secret*. "Who has ever yet," he is reported to have said, "uttered one intelligible word about Hegel? Not any of his countrymen—not any foreigner—seldom even himself. With peaks here and there more lucent than the sun, his intervals are filled with a sea of darkness, unnavigable by the aid of any compass, and an atmosphere in which no human intellect can breathe . . . Hegel is impenetrable, almost throughout, as a mountain."

Not very different were Stirling's own first impressions of Hegel, when, in Heidelberg, he opened the *Encyclopædia* for the first time :—

"The *Encyclopædia* proves utterly refractory, then. With resolute concentration we have set ourselves, again and again, to begin with the beginning, or, more desperately, with the end, perhaps with the middle—now with this section, now with that—in vain! Deliberate effort, desultory *dip*—'tis all the same thing! We shut the book; we look around for explanation and assistance. We are in Germany itself at the moment (say); and very naturally, in the first instance, we address ourselves to our own late teacher of the language. '*Other writers*,' he replies, '*may be this, may be that; but Hegel!—one has to stop! and think! and think!—Hegel! Ach, Gott!*' Such a weary look of exhausted effort lengthens the jaw! And it is our last chance of a word with our late teacher; for henceforth he always unaccountably vanishes at the very first glimpse of our person, though caught a mile off!"

Disappointed in his hopes of help from a fellow-countryman of Hegel's, Stirling turned to a fellow-countryman of his own—a man "of infinite ability," and "especially conversant with German"—with no better result. "With what a curious smile he looks up, and shakes his head, after having read the two or three first sentences of the first preface to the *Encyclopædia!*" It was not the words used in those two or three sentences which puzzled the reader. The words, as Stirling tells us, were "common and current"; but they were evidently used with "a meaning quite other than the ordinary one; *a meaning depending on some general system of thought, and intelligible consequently only to the initiated.*"

Books — the books of biographers and commentators to which Stirling now had recourse—served only to convince him that no help in grasping the system of Hegel was to be looked for from outsiders. If he was ever to reach the inner shrine of the Hegelian temple, he saw that it must be

with his own pick-axe, so to speak, that he must make his way through the walls of Hegelian granite. Second thoughts showed him that there was after all a *door* into the temple—if still, more or less, a *closed* door—and that door was Kant. If the Hegelian system "were to be understood at all, the only course that remained was to take it in its place as part and parcel of what is called *German philosophy* in general; and, with that object, to institute, necessarily, a systematic study of the entire subject from the commencement. Now that commencement was Kant."

It is here—in Heidelberg—that we seem to find the subject of this biography at the parting of the ways, with the necessity upon him of making his choice. He was still young—barely thirty-six, and perhaps, in some ways, younger than most men are at those years—he possessed what he regarded as a competence—what, living as he and his wife were doing, undoubtedly *was* a competence—and was under no obligation to exert himself to obtain his own or his family's daily bread. He had a capacity for enjoyment, a liking for cheerful society and out-of-door sports, such as boating; and he possessed a facile pen. With his wife and little children, his books, his boat, his friends and acquaintances, he might have led an easy, pleasant life, varied by desultory literary work. The alternative which offered itself was a life of what might be called concentrated intellectual drudgery, from which no visible fruits were to be expected for years, if at all. He had already had a taste of the kind of toil in which his days must be spent, if he elected to devote himself to the study of German philosophy; he knew how Hegel had baffled even his own countrymen, and how the translations of Kant into English were "most of them, to be regarded but as psychological curiosities." But he had already caught a glimpse of a truth on which, in later years, he was

never tired of insisting—that in order to do lasting work—work of solid value to humanity—at anyrate in philosophy, one must take the torch from the hand of a predecessor; one must not, as he puts it himself, "obey the impatience of vanity," but consent patiently to assimilate the "*Historic Pabulum*," and that he believed to be contained, as has already been said, in "the vessel of Hegel."

Writing some thirteen years later (in 1869) to Dr Ingleby,[1] with whom, from 1868 to 1883, he carried on a frequent correspondence, he says of Hegel that "he always proves his student's *fate*. After Hegel all else is so tame, insipid, colourless—so plainly mere verbiage! Then the difficulty of his dialectic remains to the most accomplished—and, while it is too clearly the last attempt at metaphysical explanation, the abler the mind of his student the more is this student beset with *aporias*—culs-de-sac—that are as much culs-de-sac as ever."

Hegel had, in fact, proved to be Stirling's fate. From his first acquaintance with Hegel, began that life which he describes in a letter to Mill, written several years later. "From 1856 to 1865," he writes, "I was most laboriously—rather with positive agony, indeed, and often for twelve hours a day—occupied with those German books that were not understood in England, and yet that, negatively or affirmatively, *required to be understood before an advance was possible for us*."

[1] Clement Mansfield Ingleby, LL.D., Cambridge, best known as an editor and commentator of Shakespeare, was also an excellent mathematician, and the author of one or two philosophical works.

CHAPTER VIII

General and Explanatory—Stirling's Philosophical Position

At this decisive point in the life of Stirling, when he had resolved to devote himself to the study of Hegel, it is perhaps advisable to attempt to indicate —so far as it is possible to do so in terms intelligible to the uninitiated, but thoughtful, reader for whom these pages are specially intended—the considerations which determined his decision—the grounds on which he rests the claim to supreme value of the Hegelian philosophy.

Perhaps the most obvious of those grounds is that Hegelianism is a *positive, constructive system*—not, as too many so-called philosophies are, the negation of the possibility of system, the destruction of the only foundations on which a system can be built. Together with that of Kant, of which it is the completion, the philosophy of Hegel forms the first great constructive movement which has taken place in metaphysics since the time of Aristotle, of whom Stirling regarded him (Hegel) as the modern counterpart. Stated barely so, this may not seem to constitute a very powerful claim on the part of Hegel to the gratitude of the mass of mankind; but we have still to see the full meaning of the statement.

To anyone who takes a wide view of history, it must be evident that, throughout the ages, two great movements alternately take place in the human world, analogous to those in the physical universe which the older scientists accounted for by what they named centripetal and centrifugal forces, or to the attraction and repulsion of chemistry, or the nega-

tive and positive currents of electricity. Throughout generations, perhaps centuries, the student of history may trace the gradual crystallization of the loose, floating, isolated individuals into settled communities, and of their crude, vague fancies, beliefs, opinions, into systems of faith, of law, of morals, of philosophy. Then the process is reversed; centuries of decomposition, of disintegration, of destruction follow; the crystals of creeds and systems melt into their constituent molecules; and those into their component atoms, and they again into their electrons, or whatever even smaller invisibilities they may comprise. There is no longer an orderly universe, but a chaos of isolated specks, floating, uneasy, with nothing to rest upon.

When we consider that those isolated specks—those invisibilities, or indivisibilities—are human *spirits*, it is easy to understand that those periods of decomposition and disintegration are times of pain, depression, and suffering—times of *Welt-schmerz*, as it has been called. Even the most unlettered and ignorant of human beings, at such times, is dimly conscious of a sense of want, of emptiness, of dissatisfaction. As Stirling puts it, "the Spirit that has been emptied feels, knows, that it has been only *robbed*, and, by very necessity of nature, is a craving, craving, ever-restless void."

During the centuries of what is called modern history, it is the process of decomposition and disintegration which we see going on. In almost every department of human life—in religion, in politics, in philosophy—there has been, as Stirling would name it, the assertion of the Particular against the Universal—the revolt of the Individual against Authority as expressed in institutions, creeds, and systems of thought—in every department, the judgment of the individual has exalted itself above the accumulated wisdom and experience of the race. In religion, the movement began with the Protestant Reformation,

which was a revolt against the authority of the Church of Rome; it went on in the divisions and subdivisions into smaller and ever smaller sects, which have taken place during the last century or two; and in our own day its results are manifest in the multiplicity of fantastic creeds, or the absence of any—in the fashionable fads and superstitions, the agnosticism, scepticism, or atheism—which we see around us.

In the domain of politics, the movement is seen most conspicuously in the French Revolution, during which every existing institution, every form of government or authority, was torn down and trampled under foot, amid scenes of violence and excess such as the world has seldom seen, and the Right of the Individual—the Principle of Subjectivity as Hegel would call it—was asserted in the watchword, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

In philosophy, the process of decomposition and disintegration is exemplified in the *Aufklärung*—the movement of sceptical enlightenment, or illumination, in the eighteenth century, which is associated in Britain with the name of David Hume—a movement of separation and disintegration so complete and exhaustive that it did not leave even the human atom, so to speak, an individual entity, but decomposed it into a bundle of sensations. Man found himself without the philosophical right to believe even in his own existence as a person. "The subtle suggestions of Hume," as Stirling says, "seemed to have loosened every joint of the Existent, and there seemed no conclusion but universal scepticism."

Before going further, it seems advisable to guard against the danger of seeming wholly to condemn the movement of Enlightenment, or utterly to deny the right of private judgment. That movement is often, not only justifiable and necessary, but, in its beginnings at least, salutary. The individual, the

Particular, has its inalienable rights; but, *human nature being what it is*, it is but seldom necessary, and often dangerous to the well-being of mankind, to insist upon them. At the time of the Protestant Reformation, the intellectual and spiritual tyranny of the Church of Rome, as well as its moral corruptness, made the revolt against its authority necessary; but the movement, which began as the reform of corruption, ended as a revolt against Faith, and was accompanied by similar movements in every department of human life—in the domains of politics, morality, thought. Liberty became, as it indeed, for the most part, still is, the ruling divinity; link by link, the individual snapped the chain of creeds, moral standards, systems of thought, which bound him to his fellow-men, and broke away into the isolation of the Animal that knows only its own sensations, and obeys only its own self-will.

At first the breach with authority, the assertion of his rights, brought to the individual a feeling of exultation. As Stevenson says of the child grown to manhood, terror had gone out of his life; he no longer saw "the devil in the bed-curtains." But this temporary exultation was soon followed by a depressing sense of loneliness, of emptiness, of want; the individual became dimly conscious that he was living, as Stirling puts it, "*divorced from substance* . . . isolated to himself—an absolutely abstract unit in a universal, unsympathizing, unparticipant *Atomism*." To take a homely illustration. In the course of the ages there had accumulated in the Human House, as well as necessary and useful equipments, much that was useless and cumbersome; then some fine day, an enterprising inmate threw open the windows, and pointing to the dust that covered the furniture, and the cobwebs that hung from the ceiling, declared that a Spring Cleaning was necessary. Instantly, there was a shout of assent, and all were eager to take part in the work; but they did not stop at

sweeping down walls and ceilings, and shovelling up the dust on the floors. Pictures were torn down, carpets were torn up; beds on which successive generations had slumbered peacefully were flung out of window; cupboards and wine-cellars were ransacked, and the food and drink which had satisfied the wants of ancestors condemned as unsanitary by their descendants. The human house was left bare, empty, desolate. But that was not all: there were those who said the house itself was badly built; and setting to work to prove that its foundations were insecure, reduced it to a heap of boards and bricks, and made the human family homeless outcasts.

This may be admitted to afford a pretty fair illustration of the process which had been going on in the world of thought previous to Kant, and of the condition in which he found it. In the great Spring Cleaning which had been taking place during the previous generations, much that was valuable and precious had been discarded along with the dirt and rubbish, and, finally, Hume had reduced the human edifice to a confused pile of sticks and bricks. Kant, though, as Stirling says, he "participated deeply in the spirit" of the *Aufklärung*, "saw the necessity of a *positive* complement to the peculiar *negative* industry" which had occupied his immediate predecessor. To carry on our illustration, though he believed the spring cleaning to be necessary, he knew that only half—and that the least difficult half—of the process had been accomplished when the dust-covered furniture had been flung out of window, and the cobwebs swept down from the walls and ceiling, and he was convinced that that half of the process had been carried too far when he found the house itself reduced to ruins. Out of the ruins left to him by Hume, he set himself to construct some building fit to afford shelter to humanity. "So it was that,

though unconsciously to himself, he was led to seek his *Principles*."

Just so, more than two thousand years before Kant, Socrates began the great constructive movement in philosophy which was carried on by Plato and completed by Aristotle, by endeavouring to find the *principles* underlying the chaos of individual opinions and sensations into which the human world had been dissolved as the result of the teachings of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, the Sophists. In the dictum of the founder of the sect, "Man is the Measure of all things," by "man" was meant, not what Hegel would call the Universal—not the Common Reason of humanity—but the individual man, with his subjective tastes and opinions. What is true or right for one individual, according to this dictum, is true or right *for him*, but not necessarily for anyone else. Each individual is thus shut into a world of his own opinions and sensations; and what can alone be called knowledge —*i.e.*, that which is *true for every intelligence*—as well as a standard of morality, becomes impossible. It was specially to the search for principles of *morals* that Socrates devoted himself. He believed that all particular moral judgments are based on principles, which are shared, though unconsciously, by all rational beings, and he endeavoured to make those principles explicit—to find a common meeting-ground, as it were, for all moral agents.

Those who are accustomed to condemn philosophy—and there are many such in these days—as mere vague, meaningless speculation, should ask themselves how it would be, in the sphere of human life, if there did not arise, now and then, a Socrates, a Kant, a Hegel, a Stirling to "search out the bounds between *opinion* and *knowledge*"—to find the rock of *principle* beneath the shifting sand of subjective (individual) opinion. If the individual is to be, as the Sophists maintained, the measure of

truth and right to himself, what becomes of law and morality; how is it possible for Society to exist at all? "Only fools and weaklings," says one of the Sophists in Plato's *Republic*—"only fools and weaklings are bound by law—right is nothing but the advantage of the ruler." Surely every reasonable human being must see the importance, the necessity, in the interests of human society, of combating such a position as this; every reasonable human being must admit that the philosopher, in endeavouring to find objective standards, universal principles, at least in the practical world, is doing important work for humanity. As Stirling says: "No partisan of the Illumination has ever said, Let the self-will of each be absolutely all: the control of a Police (Protection of Person and Property) has been a universal postulate, insisted on by even the extremest left of the movement."

The constructive movement begun by Socrates, as was said above, was carried on by Plato, and completed by Aristotle. What followed? Christ, meantime, by His life and death, had taught the same doctrine in terms of spirit, so to speak, as Socrates and Aristotle in terms of thought—the essential *oneness* of men with each other, and of mankind with God—yet, after two thousand years, we find the Sophists reincarnated in the disciples of the *Aufklärung*, the human world reduced to a bundle of sensations!

Perhaps, what has been said may be sufficient to prove that the constructive nature of Hegel's work forms a stronger claim to our gratitude than might at first sight appear. To revert for a moment to our illustration of the spring cleaning, Hegel found us houseless nomads; he has restored to us our *home*—not as it was before the great Spring Cleaning began—not choked with rubbish, and foul with dust and cobwebs—but clean, and fresh, and wholesome. "Hegel, in truth," to quote again from Stirling,

"would restore to us all that the Illumination has deprived us of, and that, too, in a higher and richer form, and not less in the light and element of the Illumination itself, and in perfect harmony with its principle and truth. . . . Philosophy is not to him Philosophy unless, or rather Philosophy is to him only Philosophy when, it stands up for the substance of Humanity, for all those great religious interests to which alone we virtually live." The great spring cleaning has not been in vain; even those of us who have suffered most from the period of unsettlement and convulsion, may inhale with satisfaction the fresh, clean odour of our restored home, even as we sink, with a sigh of relief, once more into our comfortable arm-chairs. If it has not been in vain, however, its day is over; yet, in certain quarters, it is still going on—eighty years after the death of Hegel, it is still going on! In the study and the library, it is true, books have been restored to their shelves, chairs and tables once more stand in their places; but down in the servants' quarters, cook and scullion and chambermaid are still hurling out of window, with shouts of derision, pots and pans and brooms and shovels, and all the other paraphernalia of the kitchen. The spirit of the *Aufklärung*, to which Hegel dealt the death-blow nearly a century ago, is still alive among the uneducated, or semi-educated, masses in the present day. It is this spirit that we meet with in almost every class of the uninitiated—in the materialism of the man of science; in the coarse atheism of the so-called "enlightened" or "broad"; in the flimsy eloquence of the Sunday lecturer; in the destructive mania of the red republican, the nihilist, the dynamiter; in the *nil admirari* of the man or woman of fashion; and even in the pages of some of our finest writers, our noblest poets, the noblest of whom can only "hope" that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill."

The light of some stars, we are told, takes hundreds of years to reach us, because of their great distance from us. Perhaps it is for the same reason—because of intellectual distance—that the thoughts expressed by thinkers of a hundred years ago have not yet penetrated the minds of the masses. And just as the stars whose light we now see may have ceased to exist, so too the philosophy which is now furnishing our intellectual food may be spiritually dead.

"Europe," says Stirling, "has continued to nourish itself from the vessel of Hume, notwithstanding that the *Historic Pabulum* has long since abandoned it for another and others." And the result is, to repeat the quotation given above, "we all live now *divorced from substance*." "Self-will, individual commodity, this has been made *the principle*, and accordingly we have turned to it that we might *enjoy ourselves alone*, that we might *live to ourselves alone*, that the I might be wholly the I, unmixed and unobstructed; and for result, the I of each of us is *dying of inanition*—even though we make (it is even *because* we make) the seclusion to self complete. . . . Hence the universal *rush* at present, as of maddened animals, to material possession. . . . Till even in the midst of material possession, and material ostentation, the heart within us has sunk into weary, weary, hopeless, hopeless ashes."

Forty-six years at least have passed since those words were written; but can anyone who reads the signs of the times—anyone who knows the present intellectual, moral, and spiritual condition of the mass of mankind—deny that they are as true now as when they were written—nay, truer? Do we not still "live divorced from Substance"? Is not self-will, individual commodity, still "the principle"? Is there not still a "universal rush, as of maddened animals, to material possession"? Do we not find "the principle"—the principle of self-will, of the Right of the Individual—every day assuming more extravagant, more degraded forms as it is adopted by intellectually lower and lower classes of men and

women? The movement which began with the assertion of the *Right to think*, has ended by the subjection of thought to the caprice, the whim, the passions of the individual. That which began as a revolt against tyranny has ended by banishing authority out of the pulpit, the lecture-room, the school, even out of the nursery! The police tell us that there are more juvenile offenders at the present day than there have ever been at any previous time, and that their number increases every day. Society has almost ceased to be an organism, with articulated limbs and members, and is fast dissolving into a chaos of individual atoms, each bristling in antagonistic isolation, like the quills of a porcupine. The epidemic of Egoism, with its *sequelae*, avarice, envy, vanity, discontent, prevails everywhere. Every woman, however little remarkable by nature, must make herself conspicuous, were it only by her dress; every school-boy, however ignorant or stupid, knows a great deal better than his father or his teacher.

> "... *unde manum juventus*
> *Metu deorum continuit? Quibus*
> *Pepercit aris?*"

Surely, there never was a time when the doctrine that whosoever would find his life must first lose it, required to be preached more than it does at present. And this doctrine—the very essence of Christianity—is perhaps, stated in simple terms, the most important *practical* outcome of Hegelianism. The Particular must subject itself to the Universal, and so find its true self. "The principle must not be Subjective Will, but Objective Will; not your will, *or* my will, *or* his will, and yet your will *and* my will *and* his will—Universal Will—Reason! Individual will is self-will or caprice; and that is precisely the one Evil, or the evil One—the Bad."

All that is said on this point—the relation of the Particular and the Universal—in the *Secret of Hegel* must have deep interest for every earnest and

thoughtful reader, for it is the expression—the vivid, striking expression—of a Truth which is of permanent value to humanity—a truth which, at intervals throughout the history of mankind, has to be stated, and re-stated, and stated again. It is part, in fact, of what Stirling calls "the choicest aliment of humanity—such aliment as nourishes us strongly into our true stature."

But the value of the Hegelian philosophy depends, for earnest, thoughtful human beings at the present day, not only on its constructive character, but also on the fact that, in an age of materialism, it stands for the *non-material, the idealistic*, for all that belongs to mind and spirit. This is the age of Science—physical science. The best brains of the day are, for the most part, occupied with microscope, or telescope, or chemical apparatus, analysing, weighing, measuring—matter, and endeavouring to discover the laws by which it is governed; and there is a marked tendency, among the educated or semi-educated masses, to exalt science above philosophy. The general belief of the uninitiated is that philosophy is concerned with airy speculations about empty abstractions, while science has its feet firmly planted, so to speak, on the solid ground of fact, its conclusions resting on the basis of experience, the evidence of the senses. Yet after all it is to philosophy that science must look for the assurance of the security of its foundations. The possibility of experience, the reliability of the so-called "evidence of the senses," has been called in question from various points of view. From the point of view of the Greek Sophists, for instance, of which mention has been made above, experience would be impossible. If each individual were to be the measure of truth to himself; if what is true for him were not necessarily so for anyone else, a common experience would be impossible for humanity. With regard to the evidence of the senses, as has been ably argued

in a comparatively recent philosophical work,[1] what it furnishes is not the indisputable *facts* on which science claims to be based, but merely *inferences*, since, according to physiology, it is only *mental states* which are the immediate objects of sense-experience, the existence of independent things which *cause* these mental states being only *inferred* from the mental states themselves.

It is not intended here to enter into any discussion of a Theory of Perception such as is familiar to every beginner in the study of philosophy. The object of the above remarks is to point out, to those who regard the "evidence of the senses" as the ultimate reality, that the question of the nature and reliability of this evidence is one that belongs to the department of philosophy—that it is philosophy which must decide the question of the solidity of the foundations on which the whole fabric of scientific discovery rests.

A common objection brought against philosophy by the adherents of science is that, after centuries of toil, she has no *results* to show, while science has discovered new elements, new laws, in matter—has traced out the course of the planets, and calculated the distance of the furthest star. One reply to this objection has already been partly indicated in what was said above in connection with Socrates and the search for *principles*. The search for principles, for laws, for *uniformities* in the *diversity* of individual objects, for the Universal element in the Particular —this is the proper business of all thinking men, whether scientific, or philosophical; but while the scientist is occupied with the laws of nature—with the uniformities exhibited by larger or smaller groups of physical objects—the philosopher is concerned with the laws of reason, with the principles which govern thought, and underlie society, with the attempt to reach the "law within the law," the

[1] *Foundations of Belief*, by the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour.

principle which is the final explanation of all other principles—the ultimate principle. Even if it be held that the ultimate principle cannot be reached by human reason, yet, according to the philosopher, the attempt to reach it must be made. In the words which Stirling puts into the mouth of Hegel :—

"Are we sent here simply to dig coals, and drink wine, and get, each of us, the most we can for our own individual vanity and pride, and then rot? What after all is the business of man here? To advance in civilization, you say. Well, is civilization digging coals, and drinking wine, etc.; or is civilization thought and the progress of thought? Is there anything of any real value in the end but thinking? . . . To tell us we cannot reach the Absolute, is to tell us not to think; and we *must* think, for we are sent to think. To live is to think; and *to think is to seek an ultimate principle.*"

If it may be allowed to make use of a simple illustration of the relative positions of the scientist and the philosopher, let us suppose that we—any man or woman of us—had fallen asleep, and on waking found ourselves in a railway carriage, along with several companions in the same plight as ourselves, who, without exhibiting the slightest curiosity as to the how or why of their situation, at once began to occupy themselves with the objects around them, one of them proceeding to draw the pattern of the paper on the ceiling, murmuring rapturously the while, with upturned eyes, "Beautiful, lovely!" while another set to ripping up the cushions, in order to see what they were stuffed with; a third, with spectacles on nose, took to deciphering the names scratched on the wood-work; and a fourth, buried in a corner of the carriage, made elaborate calculations of the speed of the train by the help of the telegraph-posts outside. Suppose, further, that, when we addressed the others, and endeavoured to arouse in them some interest in the question as to how they happened to be there at all, we were

silenced by a "My dear sir, what is the use of idle speculation? I have just found out that we are travelling at the rate of forty miles an hour;" or, "Pray, don't disturb me! I am at present occupied with a very difficult problem. I have just discovered that these cushions are stuffed with *real horse-hair;* and I am attempting to calculate how many horses' tails of average thickness would be required for the purpose"! The application of this illustration can be left to the reader's imagination; but surely, it may be said—surely, the *object* of the journey, the *starting-place*, and the *destination* —the Why, and the Whence, and the Whither—are questions of infinitely more importance to humanity than the speed of the train, the pattern on the ceiling of the carriage, or the stuffing of its cushions?

The following passage from the first of Stirling's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Law* suggests itself as peculiarly applicable here:—

"Man may go on much as he likes in his merely animal capacity . . . he finds always in the end . . . that he must *think* as well as live and enjoy; above all, that he *must think existence;* that he must inquire, once for all, *why all this is here, why* is it, *whence* is it, *whither* does it go? All that may be summed up in the single phrase, he demands *explanation*. . . . Explanation is sought for as regards the stars, and there is astronomy. Explanation is sought for as regards the constituents of the earth, etc. . . . and there are the sciences of physics, chemistry, and what not . . . and after every explanation of science in regard to the special laws of it, the questions in general, why, whence, whither? remain unanswered. These questions in general constitute philosophy. . . . Philosophy, then, receives all the explanations of the sciences, of science in general, and so instructed, proceeds to put the final question. . . . In a word, philosophy demands an explanation of existence as existence. It is all very well to say here, *that* is impossible, that is a demand which, by the very nature of the case, never can be granted. . . . Man is reason, and reason is irrepressible. . . . In a word, reason demands explanation as explanation. Now, what is that? . . . It is here that Hegel steps in."

Hegel does indeed claim to have reached the ultimate principle. Whether or not the claim be admitted, "at least we can say this," to quote again from the *Secret of Hegel*, "should the path be but a vista of imagination, and conduct us nowhere, it yields at every step the choicest aliment of humanity . . . every step of his system is towards the Immortality of the Soul, every step is towards the Freedom of the Will, every step is towards God."

The third (and last) ground on which it is maintained that the substance of Hegelianism, as expressed in the works of Hegel's British interpreter, is of supreme value to humanity, even to-day, concerns what it may be permitted to call *the Philosophic Succession*. Systems of philosophy—at least those which are of lasting value—do not spring up, like mushrooms, individual and isolated. They resemble rather the work of the coral insect, which, by building always on the foundations laid by its predecessors, at length over-tops the sea, and reaches the light of heaven. A Comte, a Schopenhauer, or perhaps a Herbert Spencer, may command contemporary admiration by the brilliant hues of the soap-bubble system, which he has blown, so to speak, with his own pipe; but a Plato, an Aristotle, a Kant, a Hegel, after years of probing and testing and measuring, raises the temple of thought one stage higher on the foundations laid by his predecessors.

In the history of philosophy in Europe, it is perhaps not too much to say that there have been but two great constructive movements—the one, in ancient times, associated with the names of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; the other, in modern times, associated specially with the names of Kant and Hegel, though Spinoza, Fichte, and Schelling have more or less directly influenced it. Each of those movements represented what has been called

above a *philosophic succession;* in each, the torch was passed from hand to hand, from predecessor to successor. Of the second, according to Stirling, Hegel is "the historical culmination and end"—a position which he owes, "not so much to common consent . . . as to the inexorable sentence of history; for there has been no step since his death which is not to be characterized as dissolution and demise."

This last remark, written by the author of the *Secret of Hegel*, and before the publication of that work, cannot be held any longer to be literally true. The appearance of the *Secret* represents one step at least which can *not* be characterized as "dissolution and demise." Its author has admittedly taken the torch from the hand of Hegel, and carried it onwards.

It is Hegel who says that the man who perfectly reproduces any system, is, *ipso facto*, already beyond it. If this is so, no one can deny that Stirling has gone beyond Hegel—that he is not merely the *interpreter*, but the *successor*, of Hegel. To use his own words with respect to the *Historic Pabulum*, if Hegel "alone of all mankind has succeeded in eating it all up out of the vessel of Kant," he (Stirling) has alone succeeded in eating it all up out of the vessel of Hegel; and, consequently, it is in his vessel—in the vessel of Stirling—that it is now contained.

For this statement—if not in its literality, at least in its substance—it would be easy to find support on the authority of a group of scholarly, gifted, and able writers on philosophy, now living, all more or less familiar with the works of Kant and Hegel. For corroboration, however, it is thought best to refer to the *Secret* itself. If anyone doubt what has been said above—if anyone think that a book published five-and-forty years ago is necessarily dead and done with, and can have

nothing to say to us to-day—let him read a page or two at random in, say, the Preface to the original edition, or in the "Struggle to Hegel," or the conclusion, and, if he is an open-minded, unprejudiced person, he will see reason to change his opinion. He will find that the book is *alive* still—alive on every page—that it is, as its author himself said of it, "*dipped in the blood of an original experience*, and possibly of an original thought," and full of thought which is as valuable to us to-day as when it was written. He will find himself echoing what the author said with respect to Hegel's work: "All the great interests of mankind have been kindled into new light by the touch of this master-hand; and surely the general idea is one of the hugest that ever curdled in the thought of man."

CHAPTER IX

1857-1860

London—Interview with Carlyle—The *Gough-Lees Controversy*—Essays on Jerrold, Tennyson, Macaulay—The Return to Scotland

THE sojourn abroad ended in 1857, curtailed probably (but this is only a matter of surmise) by the death of Stirling's last surviving brother, which took place in the beginning of July of that year. The unexpected news of his brother's death must have hastened Stirling's return to his own country. David Stirling was unmarried, and the work of settling his affairs would naturally devolve, to a large extent at least, on his only surviving brother, who, with their sister (now married), was his nearest heir.

Of the journey home, however, we have no records, nor of the period of unsettlement before November 1857, when we find Stirling and his family settled at 3 Wilton Terrace, Kensington, which was to be their home for the next three years. (Wilton Terrace, Kensington, it may be mentioned in passing, though it still stands in its old place, no longer bears its old name, and experience has proved that one may wander long about the streets of Kensington without finding it.)

Naturally, one of the first things Stirling did, when he found himself settled in London, was to endeavour to see the man who, for so many years of his young manhood, had been to him Teacher, Master, Prophet. As we saw, in Carlyle's letter of 1854, given above, there is an allusion to a meeting with Stirling, evidently some years earlier. The

only evidence that such meeting did take place, however, to be found in any writing of Stirling's, whether printed or not, is contained in the following sentence in his third *Letter on Carlyle*, which appeared in *The Truth-Seeker* for September 1850:—

"I fancy, indeed, that to gain a glimpse into the origin of his [Carlyle's] style, one has but to see the man, and hear him speak. Imagine a tall, lank figure with a somewhat blunt, honest, resolutely matter-of-fact look of face—an entity which you can easily suppose to be rather dry, shy, and stiff in all its manners and manifestations. Imagine this, and you have Carlyle's personality *as correctly as there is any occasion for*."

The words italicized here are characteristic of the philosopher (of the philosopher in all ages, perhaps—of the philosopher who is the subject of this memoir, certainly). Unlike Carlyle, who always made a point, in his descriptions of historical characters, of any peculiarities of form, or feature, or manner, Stirling always regarded the external manifestation, the *form*, as of little, or no, importance. Even with regard to literature, he was apt to be impatient with those critics who dilated on the *style* of a writer, holding that the style, the form, was of little moment, what alone was essential being the substance, the *Inhalt*, the thought.

"Beautifully written, is it?" how often has one heard him contemptuously exclaim. "Psha! what does that matter? Is there anything *in* it? Has it any *Inhalt?*"

In a letter written, in 1870, to Dr Ingleby he writes thus on the subject of style: "Do you know, I sometimes catch myself blaming myself for not looking after those things? [epigram, antithesis, etc.]. It seems to me as if I thought only of the whole and its purpose (its meaning), were anxious only to drive that home. I seem never to think of ornament—to be content to let it come or stay away

as it chooses, though as young littérateur and student, I absolutely *steamed* (smoked?)—both ugly!—with images."

As early as 1849, when he wrote the first of the *Letters on Carlyle*, he seems already to have learned not to set much value on style. Speaking of the style of Carlyle, he says:—

"Of his mere words, it appears to me, he has ceased to think; but of his thoughts he is very solicitous. He puts now no weight on mere phrases, nor distresses himself about the flow of them. And is it the words, then, or the flow of them, that, in any really great writer, constitutes his excellence?"

What the style is to literature, the external appearance—features, form, etc.—is to the man himself, *i.e.* (according to Stirling), quite insignificant. In the third of the Carlyle *Letters*, he writes:—

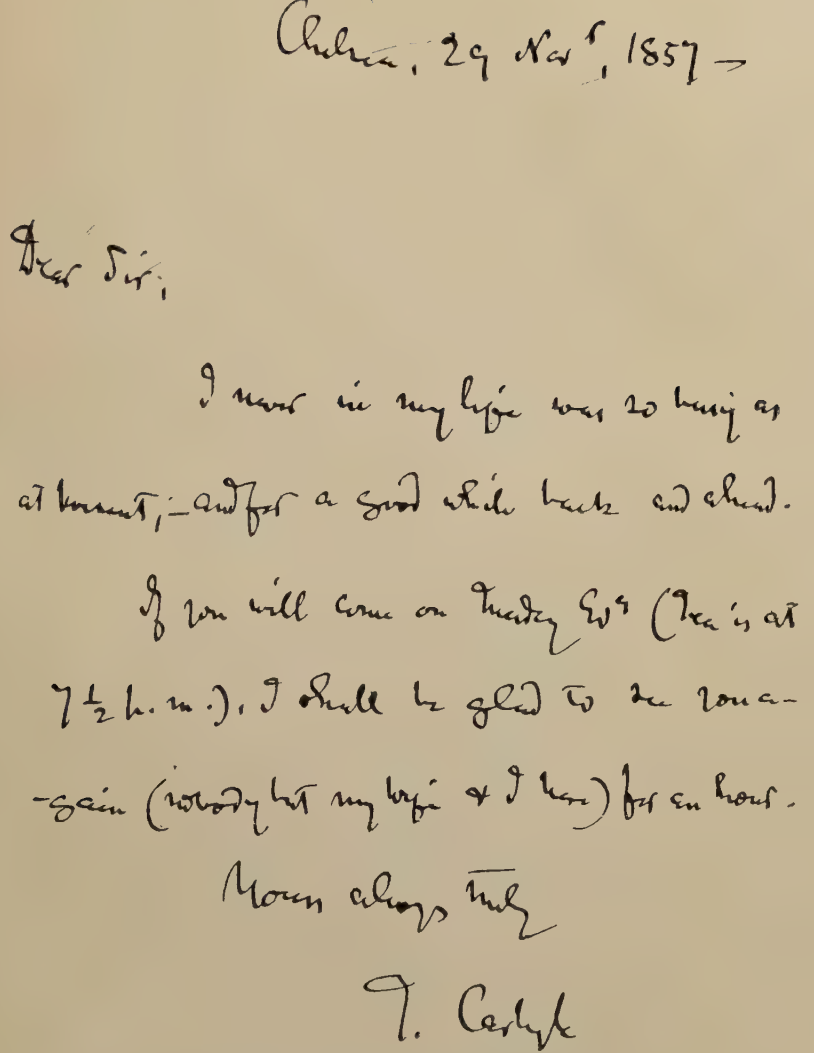
"You will excuse my want of eloquence about noble foreheads, spiritual eyes, lordly noses, intellectual wrists, and what not; for you are aware of the smallness of my faith in such things, and recollect our cozy little laugh over the information that the eye under that plain turnip-head, on the top of that long, skulking yankee-figure of Emerson, was 'the finest ever seen in living man'! Oh, my dear A., what trash all those corporalities are! For very certain am I that I have seen all sorts of hearts in all sorts of trunks, and all sorts of brains under all sorts of skulls."

Though no record of Stirling's *first* meeting with Carlyle is to be found, of the meeting which took place in 1857 there have been preserved some brief notes, as well as the following short letter from Carlyle, appointing the time of meeting:—

"Chelsea, 29 *Novr.* 1857.

"Dear Sir,—I never in my life was so busy as at present—and for a good while back and ahead.

"If you will come on Monday evng. (tea is



Chelsea, 29 Nov^r, 1857 –

Dear Sir;

I never in my life was so busy as at present; – and for a good while back and ahead.

If you will come on Tuesday Ev^g (Tea is at 7½ h. m.), I shall be glad to see you again (nobody but my wife & I here) for an hour.

Yours always truly

T. Carlyle

FAC SIMILE LETTER FROM THOMAS CARLYLE.

To face p. 138.

at 7½ p.m.), I shall be glad to see you again (nobody but my wife and I here) for an hour.—Yours always truly, T. CARLYLE."

In response to the invitation contained in this note, Stirling presented himself at Cheyne Row on the evening of the 1st December, and found Mr and Mrs Carlyle in a "little front room," with "a good fire, red curtains, and a little oval table." Presumably, the room contained more than the fire, the curtains, and the "little oval table." (Indeed, there is mention, later, of a chair!); but Stirling was always practically blind to the furniture of a room, and in fact regarded it as unbecoming and undignified, if not actually contemptible, to see either "a man's clothes, or the clothes of his house." The occasion of this meeting with Carlyle is evidently the exception that proves the rule, for he describes the Chelsea sage as wearing a "high collar, plain, high-stock, and long, brown, great-coat-looking dressing-gown." Of Mrs Carlyle's dress, he trusts himself to give only a brief, *negative* description—"no head-dress, I think." That is all! With regard to the rest of her clothing, our imagination is allowed to run riot. We can picture her as circular with the crinoline, or straight and slender with clinging draperies, or even as bifurcated with the costume of the harem. Even on the question of the head-dress we are left in doubt! That "I think" is characteristic—the philosopher will not commit himself definitely to the statement that there was no head-dress. After all, there *may* have been one, although he did not notice it—he is well aware of his lack of observation in such matters.

With respect to the personal characteristics of both Carlyle and his wife, there is a little more in the way of description. Mrs Carlyle is described as of "middle-size, pale, with pleasant quiet voice, pleasant smiling eyes, a good face, hair apparently

still black—spoke but seldom." Carlyle is put before us as a "tall, lank figure, hand an extraordinary bunch of fingers, moustache half-grown, black still, whisker round chin grizzled at upper edge, cheek ruddy, but this time hectic-like—flush of vigil, and eye of the lustre and glare of vigil—a general *raised* look, as of a man with his nervous system in unnatural tension—kind of intellectual animal magnetism, every pore an eye—his hair grey now, still down on brow, brow struck me as both low and narrow. The face small, oval, and pointing towards chin."

Of the conversation on the occasion, only the mere *headings* are jotted down—only the subjects spoken of, not what was said by Carlyle on any of them. They spoke of the weather, of Stirling's new home at Kensington, of his sojourn abroad. Did he speak German anything fluently? he was asked. Carlyle, it is remarked, is "accustomed now to receive people who only come to see and hear—prone to prose on dreamily about the places he has seen, his impressions, etc." He "spoke of Merthyr and Crawshay—and money—and titles—gave anecdotes of merchants—the island of Calydon [?]—Dixon's blast—the Glasgow banks—the British nation going to H—[!]—*Times*—Literature—useless epigrammatists — Thackeray, Dickens, Bunsen (Kant, Spinoza, Hegel — knows little of those), Jerrold, Sir J. Clark, Carpenter—Annan, Dumfries, Ecclefechan."

This seems a sufficiently wide range of subjects —especially when one adds to them Dyspepsia, and Carlyle's daily three-hour rides in cure of it, homœopathy, the English, Classical marine stores, and Mill's *Logic!*

The jottings conclude with this remark:— "General idea of a pair of good simple human beings, of whom rather remarkable that so many people in so many different places should be speaking and writing."

Reading between the lines here, one cannot help seeing that Stirling has now outgrown, not his admiration of Carlyle, but his exclusive worship of him. Although to the end of his life he retained the warmest admiration for the original genius of the author of *Sartor* and *Hero-worship*—for his "intense zeal and fervid eloquence," his "rare truth and trenchancy of stroke," his "fiercest, keenest indignation against wrong and injustice"—it is evident that, by 1857, Carlyle had ceased to be to him the only guide and prophet, "our beginning, our middle, and our end." Already he had begun to see that it was not in the vessel of Carlyle that the *Historic Pabulum* was to be found, the "inhaustion" of which he had come to regard as the proper business of Humanity. Already the influence of the "home-spun, rustic-real, blunt" Suabian, Hegel, had begun to manifest itself in a growing distaste for mere "*Genieschwünge*"—flights of genius. Already he had come to regard the Universal as alone important and significant, while Carlyle, for his part, stood in general by the Particular. As Stirling himself writes:—

> "To generalize is for him [Carlyle] to do nothing but waste paper; he must particularize. The universal is to him a pallid ghost, and impalpable: he must see instead, show us instead, the red blood of the individual. What Aristotle calls the δέυτερα οὐσία Carlyle will not look at; he must have the πρώτη οὐσία, just the τόδε τι, this one actual singular and single thing at once. And yet our business is to *think*, while it is only by universals, and never by singulars, that we *can* think."[1]

It was during his three years' stay at Kensington that Stirling made the acquaintance of Kinglake, the author of *Eothen*, and the historian of the Crimean War, to whom reference was made in the previous chapter. About the same time probably it was that he began his correspondence with George

[1] *Thomas Carlyle's Counsels*, pp. 19, 20.

Cupples, author of the celebrated sea novel, *The Green Hand*, with whom he was long and intimately acquainted. Unfortunately, however, the earlier letters of the correspondence do not seem to have been preserved. There is still extant, however, a brief critical notice by Stirling of Cupples's later novel, *Hinchbridge Haunted*, which appeared in the *Inverness Courier* of 15th December 1859.

Those years in London were part of the strenuous nine, alluded to in last chapter, when Stirling was occupied "with positive agony, and often for twelve hours a day" in preparing for his *magnum opus;* yet even his severe labours did not make him deaf to the call of friendship. It was in March 1859 that he came generously forward as champion of the loser in a *cause célèbre* long since forgotten—the *Gough-Lees Controversy*. In this case, Dr Lees, the well-known lecturer on Temperance, and leader in the Teetotal movement, was accused of libelling another lecturer on Teetotalism—a certain Mr Gough—and it seemed as if popular sympathy in general, as well as the opinions of those who acted as judges in the case, were almost entirely with the latter. Stirling himself, who had some personal acquaintance with Dr Lees, was inclined at first—before possessing a full knowledge of the facts of the case—to take the popular side; but after reading the whole history of the case, as presented *by the friends of Mr Gough*, in the *Weekly Record*, he at once wrote a letter of sympathy to Dr Lees, and some time afterwards, a careful and incisive examination of the case, which was printed with the title, "Why I wrote a Letter of Sympathy to Dr Lees."

To take the trouble to wade through the dreary mass of correspondence which gathers round a case of this sort, carefully to compare, and weigh, and sift the evidence, would constitute a convincing proof of friendship, even on the part of a more or less unoccupied person; but when the man who

does all this is at the grips, "often for twelve hours a day," with an uncomprehended, if not incomprehensible, writer on an abstruse subject, it argues the possession on his part of most unusual loyalty. chivalry, and love of truth and justice. The little pamphlet in question, in spite of the inherent dryness of the subject, is illumined by flashes of the writer's vivid style, his humour, and power of seizing on the salient features of character; and the reader, moreover, is left in no doubt as to what is the real truth of the matter—that Dr Lees has been condemned on no better evidence than a private letter of his own (not intended to go further than the *friend* to whom it was written), in which he had simply repeated a statement in common circulation. The conclusion reached by Stirling was, it is believed, the view of the matter afterwards generally accepted.

It was at the request of a friend that, in the same year, he intermitted his philosophical labours to pen a light sketch on *Full Dress*, which appeared in the *Englishwoman's Review* for July 1859, and was afterwards included among the *Saved Leaves* published in 1878. The little paper, if not very important, is interesting as showing Stirling in an unfamiliar vein. It is written in a bright, smart, vivacious style, quite unlike what readers of his philosophical works are accustomed to associate with him. The following very brief extract will serve by way of example :—

"Fair reader, do not fear! I am not going to touch your crinolines. . . . The *base* of the pyramid I abandon to avenging fire, or the assaults of *Punch;* my business is with the *apex*. In other words, what you name as full dress, or low dress, is offensive to my sympathies and my judgment, and I must remonstrate with you. . . . I know why people dress : it is for warmth—it is for decency —it is for ornament. But *you*—you *undress!*"

The friend at whose request this article was written was Miss Kate Barland—a woman of many accomplishments, of some learning, and great intellectual activity, and the writer of verses, which, if they do not entitle her to a place among the immortals, at least prove the possession on her part of undoubted poetic feeling and great earnestness. After her death, which took place in 1875, Stirling had it in mind to publish a selection of her verses, with a brief biographical sketch by himself; but, for various reasons, this intention was never carried out. He had, however, gathered together the materials for the contemplated volume, and even written a very brief biographical sketch.

One story told about Miss Barland is interesting as illustrating the extraordinary narrow-mindedness of sixty years ago. In 1847, she had the honour of being introduced to the great American essayist, Emerson, then on a visit to Glasgow, where she had a private school. Much as she personally appreciated the honour of the introduction, however, it was otherwise looked upon by the parents of her pupils. In their opinion, a person acquainted with Emerson was not orthodox enough to teach their children, and, as she used to say afterwards, "they took away my bread from me." Unfortunately, it was not merely her own bread that they took from her—for years, with some small help from a sister, she was bread-winner for a paralyzed father and a helpless mother.

It was Miss Barland who pointed out, some years later, the resemblance which Stirling undoubtedly bore to the pictures of the great Prince Bismarck. Both faces seem to show the same large, open brow, the same keen, penetrating gaze, the same firm, resolute mouth and chin—the same energy, independence, and decision—but the face of the statesman was more massive, and rough-hewn, that of the philosopher finer and more clear-cut.

The year 1859 was a very productive one with Stirling; for it was during that year that, besides the *Full Dress* article, and the Gough-Lees pamphlet mentioned above, two of his well-known essays (those on Jerrold and Tennyson) appeared in *Meliora;* and they were followed, in the spring of 1860, by the essay on Macaulay. Those three essays, which, together with others on De Quincey and Coleridge, and Ebenezer Elliott, were published in book form in 1868, are admittedly amongst the best of Stirling's literary writings, and each is very distinct and different in character from the other—as distinct and different as the subjects were from each other. The essay on Tennyson, besides being warm and enthusiastic in its admiration and appreciation of the poet, is itself poetical in its language, poetical in its imagery; that on Macaulay is calm, critical, incisive as befits the subject, while the *Jerrold* is kindly, and tender, and human in its tone, dealing rather with the man, for whom Stirling had a genuine and grateful affection, than with the writer, of whose faults he was keenly sensible.

While the essayist is quite just in his criticisms of all three writers, it is easy to see, when one reads between the lines, which of them has his sympathy. His warmest sympathy is all for the poet, Tennyson, and the man, Jerrold. As for Macaulay, although his many excellent qualities as a writer are admitted, his standpoint—the *Aufklärung*—puts him outside the pale of his critic's sympathy. "All systems," he is quoted as saying, "religious, political, or scientific, are but *opinions* resting on evidence more or less satisfactory." It was impossible for the philosopher, whose business it was, as we saw in Chapter VIII., to "search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge"—to endeavour to find the bed-rock of principle beneath the shifting sand of opinion—it was impossible for the philosopher to sympathize

with the point of view indicated in the quotation. Nevertheless, he does ample justice to Macaulay's merits as a historian and scholar. Speaking of his *History*, he says :—

"There was [in the *History*] a judgment tamed into the measure of success by its very circumspection, its very ascription to the general philosophy of the eighteenth century — a judgment which, within this range, was luminously clear and sharply precise. There was a memory eminently retentive, ready, and suggestive, stored, too, with material, teeming with illustration, prompt with allusion. There was a fancy exceedingly vivid, quick, and fertile. . . . Accordingly a result so splendid has been produced that its incompletion will remain the lament of our latest literature."

In spite of all those excellent qualities, however, and of a power of "striking epithets and sharp, well-defined predication" elsewhere spoken of in the essay, it is easy to see that Macaulay does not arouse the enthusiastic admiration of his reviewer. Throughout the essay, Stirling is the calm, keen-eyed, fair-minded critic, for its subject does not, in spite of all his brilliant gifts, possess the qualities which rouse him to enthusiasm and fervour.

"He cannot originate, he cannot create," is the conclusion of the essay, "but he disposes admirably, and has a marvellous power of what the French call *mise en scène*. In subtlety, depth, fertility, in spontaneity of thought, he is infinitely behind his own great prototype Hume. To the solidity, the comprehensiveness, the completeness, the immensity of range of Gibbon, he can have no pretension. To the earnestness, the intensity, the *vision* of Carlyle, he is equally a stranger. With men like these he is simply incommensurable. His place is not among the kings; he holds no throne; he sits not by the sides of Thucydides and Tacitus."

As a critic[1] said of this essay at the time of its appearance in book form in 1868, "It is a fine specimen of philosophical criticism, that seizes the

[1] In the *Edinburgh Courant*, March 23, 1868.

inner spirit of the subject discussed, criticizing from the heart outwards, as from a centre to the circumference, and not from the waistcoat inward."

If it is the critic that we see all through the essay on Macaulay, in that on Tennyson it is the enthusiastic, fervid admirer. Every page of the *Tennyson* fairly glows with the poetic ardour awakened in the writer by his warm sympathy with his subject. Tennyson surely never had the good fortune to meet with a more deeply sympathetic and comprehending critic, and one at the same time not lacking in discrimination. No less remarkable than the fervour and enthusiasm of the essay is the courage which its writer displays. In 1859 Tennyson had not secured the high place in poetry which he now holds; but the unknown writer of the critique in *Meliora*, with the clear insight, and the unswerving self-reliance of judgment, which are the marks of original intellect, does not hesitate to give the living poet a place among the accepted immortals.

"But of all poetic triads," he writes, "the last surely is the richest, the happiest, and the completest. Shelley, Keats and Tennyson! No, not even in their own verses can we find a more harmonious and triumphant triplet. They are the three Graces of English literature—our trinal Catullus—and should never be found apart. . . . 'What!' we hear the commoner critics cry, 'do you dare to rank among dead and accepted classics a mere living aspirant?' Not only that, but we dare to say that this living aspirant, as the ripest of the triad, must take precedence of these, his otherwise equal fellows. As completed bard, indeed, and in consideration (with special reference to Wordsworth) of the richer humanity and wider universality of his range, Tennyson, perhaps, transcends the whole series of poets that separates him from Milton."

But this essay, though it passes in review almost every poem of Tennyson's which had been published at the time, from *Claribel* and *The Owl*

up to *In Memoriam*, *Maud*, and *The Idylls of the King*, is more than a review of Tennyson's poetry. To find Tennyson's true place, the writer must compare him with his predecessors, and so Milton, Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats are appraised in a few telling strokes, and with such intensely sympathetic insight as compels assent on the part of the reader. In Milton, we are told, there is "a density and intensity of metal, audible in the very breadth and depth of the mere ring of it, that place him above all later aspirants," while at the same time he is "fierce, intolerant, Hebraic." Of Wordsworth, while his best sonnets, his *Laodamia*, and his *Vernal Ode* are declared to "approximate him to Milton," it is admitted that all through his poems we "fancy we detect . . . an occasional insonority as of original wood." There is more warmth in the touches with which Shelley and Keats (the critic's favourite poets) are set before us.

"Then Shelley, with his imagination as of the unclouded blue when nothing but the sun is there—his selfless heart—his boundless sympathies—his pity and his gentleness—his images which are as living sublimities that awe — the supernatural melody of his verse — the unparalleled splendour and magnificence of his innumerable products — how shall we abate him under any man? Keats again, so fecund, facile, full, with his delicious sound, his instantaneous instinct of the very self of elemental beauty, his sumptuous fancy, his gracious imagination—Keats blowing a pipe so mellow that it charms, whispering single words that are as 'open sesames' to the most enchanting secrets."

With regard to Tennyson, the reviewer concludes that his "main characteristics" are "ethical conception and classical execution"; and he winds up with the following beautiful comparison of the five poets whom he associates together:—

"It is this ethical or human side of Tennyson that involved his necessity for maturity and experience. To

Keats, who had no quest but sensuous beauty, boyhood sufficed. To Shelley again, who, too eager to wait, too impatient for the laws of time, must, instantly and at once, give voice and shape to all his crude sympathies and torrid anticipations, youth gave verge enough. But Tennyson, who bore the burthen of a purer, richer, larger humanity, required the breadths of space for his roots, and the heights of Time for his branches. . . . We may say that Milton keeps the summit of the hill, and sits amid the thunders; that Wordsworth has chosen for himself a separate crag, where he lives in a somewhat thin complacency, but waited on by simple dignity and solemn earnestness; that Shelley takes the very breast of the mountain, fronting the firmament and the sun; that Keats has found a haunted wood upon the flank, where flash the white feet of the gods and goddesses; and that Tennyson, holding himself free to wander where he will, prefers the fields of labour and the flowers of culture hard by the smoke of roofs."

All these passages quoted bear testimony, not only to a faculty of poetic insight and sympathy extremely rare in these days, but also to a power of vivid expression and imagery which are truly poetic. There are other passages, however, in which it is the philosophic, rather than the poetic, faculty of the writer which is manifested, as in the following. The writer has been speaking of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and of "the questionings" in it; and he goes on to point out how it is the note of interrogation—an interrogation to which there is no reply—that is the prevailing one in the works of all writers of the time.

"Why is this?" he asks. "Is there nothing for the race but scepticism and the senses, or—scepticism and suicide? Surely we have advanced, at last, beyond the mere putting of the problem; surely the answering of it 'must even now be of ripe progress!' Surely there is this answer, at all events, that Christianity, after French criticism and German criticism, and accepting each for what it is worth, and for all it is worth, is a purer thing than ever, and that it will live for ever, and grow for ever . . . the true result of the latest philosophy—the true result of Kant and

Hegel—is that knowledge and belief coalesce in lucid union, that to reason as to faith there is but one religion, one God, one Redeemer."

It is with a shock of wonder that one reads this passage and the context, written over fifty years ago. More than half a century has passed since the writer of it looked for the "answering of the problem" "even now"; and even yet we have not advanced beyond "the mere putting of it," or if any answer is attempted, it is the answer of despair! Yet here, in this essay, written by a then unknown hand, and published in an obscure periodical, there is already an answer suggested—an answer not of despair—which, six years later, received a fuller, deeper, more exhaustive statement in the essayist's *magnum opus*.

Of the essay on Jerrold it is needless to say more here, as a pretty full reference to it has already been made in a former chapter.

It was just at the time when the *Jerrold* article appeared in *Meliora*, and when its author was probably revolving the *Tennyson* in his mind, that there occurrred an outbreak of scarlet fever in his family. In those days, the sanitary inspector had not yet become the tyrant he now is; and the fever hospital was not the universal refuge of the stricken. As they sickened one after the other, Stirling's little children were laid up in their home at Wilton Terrace, Kensington. It was before the days when nursing had become a skilled profession; nurses were comparatively few, and very far from skilful in the management of their patients; and unfortunately the mother of the children was unable to give any help in the tending of her little ones, as she was herself confined to bed at the time, with a doctor and monthly nurse in attendance. The chief burden, not only of anxiety, but of the actual nursing, fell upon the father. Fortunately he was a doctor, as well as a literary man and a budding

philosopher. The two eldest children were very dangerously ill; and there were two or three days of grave anxiety and fears for their recovery. Then came an evening when the visiting doctor in attendance shook his head, as he turned away from the bedside of the little girl,[1] who he feared would have passed out of his care before morning. But all night long her father sat by her little bed, administering at intervals a spoonful of brandy or beef-tea, and now and then, when the fever-restless child whispered weakly, "Lift me, papa!" taking her in his arms, and holding her for a while; and in the morning the crisis was passed, the child's life was saved. It is an interesting fact that the father, though daily, hourly, in such close contact with the malady, from which he had never before suffered, entirely escaped infection.

In the following year (1860) Stirling and his wife decided to leave London, and make their home in Scotland. Many reasons contributed to this decision; but perhaps the strongest was that the climate of London did not agree with Mrs Stirling, who was never very well during her three years' stay there. In June 1860, Stirling went ahead of his family to Edinburgh, where he was to look out for a house, which was to be their future home. He did not find the search a very easy one, to judge from the following characteristic letter to his wife:—

"I can hardly either crawl or scrawl—my legs feel as if broken, and I am all dazed and in a fever—I can see nothing but one little house, six small rooms, and a smaller closet—a kitchen, etc., very small, and a dungeon—dirty—dirty—no grates—all like a ruin. No empty houses at Portobello. £16 a month asked in furnished lodgings for our wants. There is nothing else for it—Pope warehouses the furniture—you come on. . . . I forget

[1] Stirling's eldest daughter, who afterwards became the wife of the Rev. Robert Armstrong, Glasgow.

whether I gave you my address—write me—the weather is charming now—I wish to heaven I could get a week in bed!"

The absence of a date on the above letter makes it impossible to determine the exact length of the interval between the writing of it and of one, dated June 21, in which the writer gives his wife his final advice about her journey north. "If the weather is good, and the sea smooth," he writes, "perhaps you had better contract for the whole lot.[1] You may arrive at Granton very early in the morning, and the stewardess may wish to get quit of you, but just stay on board till I come—I will be there at ½ past 8."

This letter is interesting as containing a list of what Stirling seems to have regarded as the necessaries of life. "As the things [furniture] are stored," it goes on, "you must bring all we require for living and clothing. Books, too, I must have. Bring Willie's and all the children's books and things. Bring for me Anton's Homer (I saw it in drawing-room by case of instruments), Voss's Homer, the little Greek and Latin books lately bought, Ahn's two Greek courses, the Greek grammar, Sandford's Greek extracts, the old Greek dictionary, Horace, Latin and German dictionary, the Atlas, the German and English dictionary (2 vols.), the French dictionary, the Italian and French ditto, Otto's German book, Ollendorff and Key both for French and German—all the Ollendorffs and Keys—Hutton's mathematics, Euler's Algebra, Euclid, Hume's Essays, my prize books, Aristotle's Metaphysics, all my medical books and *note* books that are beside the printed medical books. Every book with Hegel on it in German—the German Kant (not the English), 2 works of

[1] Mrs Stirling acted on this advice; but as "the whole lot" (which included a French nurse-maid) suffered from sea-sickness which lasted during the entire passage, she was not without doubts of the practical wisdom of her lord and master!

Schelling, one of Fichte, one of Reinhold, one of Rosenkranz (green and tan), one on philosophy by Schwegler, the Bibles, the boxes of instruments and of weights and scales."

To most people the above list would seem to contain enough books to keep even a philosopher going for a while till he could get all his possessions together; but the writer of the letter was not of that opinion! He adds: "Look about for everything or book I might like . . . . look for Milton, Burns, Shelley, and Keats, etc., if room for them—bring the *Melioras* and the papers and newspapers beside them that relate to the articles—bring the *Jerrold* with my articles, *Truth-Seekers* ditto, and *Leigh Hunt* ditto."

So, in the summer of 1860, Stirling found himself, with his family about him, once more settled on his native soil, which he was never again to quit save for two or three brief visits, at long intervals, to other places. His *Wanderjahre* were now over; thenceforth the life of the philosopher was to be marked by few external events save the successive appearances of his various works; thenceforth it was to be devoted almost entirely to thought, and study, and intellectual toil.

CHAPTER X

1861-1865

Stirling's Home in Edinburgh—His Work and Recreations—Publication of the *Secret of Hegel*—Its Reception—Opinions of Erdmann, Green, Emerson, Carlyle

After about a year spent in temporary furnished lodgings, Stirling and his wife succeeded in finding a house to suit their wants. Situated about halfway between Edinburgh and the sea-shore at Portobello, it offered the advantages of moderate rent, an open space for the children to play in, proximity to the sea and beach, and above all, quiet and freedom from disturbance for the philosopher, who had still before him four of those nine years of intense toil and mental strain that preceded the appearance of his *magnum opus*. By a curious coincidence, the house in which Stirling spent eleven years of his life, and the *Secret of Hegel* saw the light, was the same, it appears, in which, some five years earlier, the well-known writer, Hugh Miller, had lived. It was pleasantly situated, its front windows commanding a wide view of the sea, while those in the back of the house looked towards Arthur's Seat.

It was in a small back room on the upper storey (spoken of by the family, in awed tones, as "the Study") that Stirling passed through his final struggle with the adamantine Hegel, out of which he issued triumphantly with the *Secret* in his hand. Within the four walls of that little room by far the greater part of Stirling's day was spent—at least, during the four years before the publication of his first book. Society entered but little into

his life or that of his wife, for they had, during those early years, few acquaintances in Edinburgh, and almost his only recreation, after hours of mental toil, was a "constitutional" walk by the sea-side at Portobello, or round the Queen's Drive at Arthur's Seat, a romp in the dining-room with his children, or an occasional talk with his friend George Cupples (who, however, had left the neighbourhood before the appearance of the *Secret*).

The shadow of those years of toil fell, to some extent, on Mrs Stirling, who, naturally of a cheerful, social disposition, was thrown almost entirely on her own society, and forced to repress the boisterous spirits of her children, when they threatened to become too noisy, with a "Hush! You mustn't disturb your father." Like Desdemona, however, Mrs Stirling was "subdued to the quality of her lord"; but the elder children were sometimes known to revenge themselves against the cause of the restrictions placed on their liberty of action by execrating "that horrid book," though no doubt the grievances of the morning were forgotten in the evening, when the philosopher would issue from his *sanctum* to play with his little ones, crawling on hands and knees as a "dog" or a "wolf" to amuse them, telling them stories, or giving them "rides" on his shoulders.

While his leisure moments were occupied with such innocent, if trivial, play, Stirling was, during his hours of work, pressing on with his book, which was now drawing near completion. From a scrap of paper, enclosed by way of postscript in a letter to Cupples, dated Feb. 6, 1865, we learn what was the length of time occupied in the actual writing of the book. "I add a word," it runs, "just about time of composition of which you speak. Exactly two years ago, I began II.,[1] translating *currente*

[1] Vol. II. of first edition of the *Secret*, which was published in two volumes.

calamo and without copying. I then wrote out the 'Struggle' from notes according to time, without altering them, but occasionally rejecting and burning. The commentaries were written also, for the most part, without copying. All that was done before Xmas of same year, or in ten months. . . . Preface, 'Commentators,' and Conclusion were written in less than four months."

We see from this that the writing of the book was begun in February 1863, and occupied just one year and two months. Those who know the book will be able to understand how close must have been the application of the writer to his task, in order to enable him to complete those two large volumes in the time specified. But the hardest part of his work was over before the first word of the book was written. In a previous chapter, something has already been said of the difficulties—insurmountable almost, it seemed at first—which he encountered when he came to the study of Hegel, of the years which he had to spend in the "patient assimilation of the Historic Pabulum," and of how, in his attempt to understand Hegel, he found himself compelled to institute "a systematic study of the entire subject" of German Philosophy from its commencement—to make himself at home with the philosophies of Hume, Fichte, Schelling, and especially of Kant. And after that—after he had satisfied himself as to Hegel's place in the Philosophic Succession—after he had realized fully his starting-point—there still remained the difficulty of understanding Hegel's language, though it consisted generally of common words in common use. "With the others—with Kant, with Fichte, with Schelling—there was a universally intelligible speech. But, Hegel!—Hegel had changed all that. The ball he flung down to us showed no clue; the principles that underlay the winding of it were undiscoverable; and what professed to be the explication was a tongue un-

known ; not the less unknown, indeed, but the more exasperating, that it was couched, for the most part, in the oldest and commonest of terms." For, to quote again a sentence already quoted, in the use of those common words "there lay a meaning *depending on some general system of thought, and intelligible consequently only to the initiated.*"

Here, then, was the puzzle with which the would-be interpreter of Hegel had found himself confronted at the outset—how to enter the temple by a locked door, the only key to open which was within the temple itself! The only means by which to reach comprehension of the Hegelian system was through the language of Hegel, and that was intelligible only to those initiated in the system. How was one to become initiated? One of the interesting features of the *Secret* is the way in which we are permitted to see the steps by which the writer himself arrived at a full understanding of the system of Hegel. The "Struggle to Hegel," which occupies more than half of the first volume of the original edition, is valuable not only as an exposition of the subject with which it deals, but also biographically and psychologically. The writer permits the reader to follow him through the actual process of his groping towards the light of comprehension, to catch with him the first faint gleam of dawn, and to watch it brightening and broadening into day. As Stirling himself says in a letter written to George Cupples shortly after the publication of the book (on Feb. 2, 1865), "all is *dipped in the blood of an original experience*, and possibly of an original thought."

Writing four years later (March 1, 1869) to Dr Ingleby, he explains the intention of the form of the book. "I am glad you do get on with Hegel in some way, and quite understand all your feelings. You will find I give specimens of like moods in my own experience, in which Hegel only shows as

a grinning impostor. Hegel, for all that, is the completer and closer of the Kantian philosophy, and the greatest abstract thinker that ever lived, with the exception, perhaps, of Aristotle alone, who very much excelled Hegel, at least in compass and fertility. What I propose by my book is this:—I suppose a student to have been reading for months or years those sections of the Logic of Hegel, which I translate, and to have understood nothing—I propose, in short, to make this student understand what the mooned madness is, whence it comes, how it is brought about, and to what end it tends. Now, I conceive I have done all that, but all that will not be realized without great patience and labour. General statements will never convey Hegel—a sufficiently large cantle of his detail must first of all be minutely and accurately understood, and then snatches made to the whole; for it is only from some perception of the whole that anything like satisfaction will at last come. So far as necessity is concerned, I conceive one paragraph in my letter on Flint[1] to carry all up to the last and lucidest point. I might say the same for the note I have on Hegel in the *Schwegler*. Yet I find from you and others that these generalizations wholly fail—there is nothing for it, then, but to get a sufficient clutch of the particular and particulars."

Though the *Secret* is professedly only an exposition, originality is the quality which to the general reader appears most conspicuous in its pages. "*Sui generis*," "unique in the whole course of English literature," "colossal," were some of the epithets applied to the style of the book soon after its publication. After quoting, in a letter to Cupples, some of the remarks made about his style, Stirling says naïvely: "Now to me all that is unintelligible—I cannot for the life of me discern that *race* that is spoken of." His style, in fact, was so native,

[1] In *Courant* newspaper, Dec. 1868.

spontaneous, and at the same time so familiar to himself that it seemed to him impossible that it should be new and original to others.

Even the form of the book was new and uncommon. It was issued in two volumes, one containing the "Struggle to Hegel," and the translation of part of Hegel's work, while the second contained an interpretation of that translation, and a Conclusion, the object being that the reader, while engaged with the "translation," could have the "interpretation" open before him for reference. In the Preliminary Notice to the first edition, the author suggests that a reader should begin his study of the book by reading, or attempting to read (!) the Translation of "Quality." The various stages in the "Struggle," he remarks—perhaps somewhat grimly!—"will be fully intelligible only to him who endeavours to advance as far as 'Limit,' either in the translation, or in Hegel's own Logic."

But if the form of the book, and the style of the writing, appeared strange to those who approached the *Secret* for the first time, what of the *matter*—what of the claims which the author makes for the system expounded? To a letter of Stirling's, dated June 22, 1864, there is appended a postscript, which, though humorous in form, may be taken as giving a fair statement of all that the Hegelian system claims to explain, while at the same time showing the startling effect of such a statement on the uninitiated. "I cannot help adding," Stirling writes, "that I put the Dr[1] quite in a panic about my wits the other day by telling him, when he remarked supposingly that Hegel was explanation and not genesis, that it must really be looked on as genetic—H.'s work, that is—that no position could be put which speculative philosophy could not answer, as, for instance, why was there a God—anything at all—how did God make

[1] Dr Jacob Hunter, a retired doctor, and a common acquaintance of Stirling's and Cupples's.

Himself—how did it occur to God to make the creation —and how was that accomplished!!! The Dr parted with me just then—I have not seen him since—I really believe he thought my brain turned at last!"

Whatever the "doctor" might think, when Stirling made the above somewhat startling statement, he was claiming no more for Hegel's work than Hegel himself claims for it, only the claim is expressed here, not as Hegel himself expresses it, in *Begriffe*, but in *Vorstellungen*. It may be remembered that, in an early chapter, attention was called to the distinction—a most important one with Hegel and Stirling—between *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*—between "a symbol, a metaphor, as it were, an externalization of thought" and a pure notion—"thought proper." The poet expresses himself in *Vorstellungen*—figurative conceptions, pictures; the philosopher deals with *Begriffe*—pure thought. The ordinary man thinks in pictures—not in the new, original pictures of the poet, but in crude figures, obscured and distorted by error and ignorance and prejudice, so that the truth they express is but very dimly revealed. Then comes the critic, the *Aufgeklärter*, as Stirling would call him, the man of mere *abstract* understanding, and mocks at those crude images of the unenlightened, *taking them for all*—not seeing the truth that is behind them. Last comes the philosopher, and interprets them *in terms of thought*, expressing in pure notions (*Begriffe*) the truth which they so imperfectly reveal. So it is that philosophy—the philosophy, at least, of Hegel and Stirling—gives back to us our Faith, of which the *Aufklärung* would have robbed us—gives it back to us in *Begriffe*, purified from the accretions of error and superstition which have gathered about them in the course of the ages.

In the sentence quoted, the words, "how did God make Himself," and "make the creation," are *Vorstellungen*. The God of Hegel is not the Big

Man of the nursery imagination, making the universe with His hands, as the child makes its mud-pies, or its sand-castles. "We cannot suppose God making the world like a mason."[1]

"God is spirit, and the life of spirit is thought. Creation, then, is thought also; it is the thought of God. God's thought of the Creation is evidently the *prius* of the creation; but with God, to think must be to create, for He can require no wood-carpentry or stone-masonry for this purpose; or even should we suppose Him to use such, they must represent thought, and be disposed on thought."[2]

In Chapter VIII. it was said that the proper business of all thinking men, whether scientific or philosophical, is the search for *principles*—for uniformities in the diversity of individual objects, for the Universal element in the Particular. Indeed the power of apprehending principles, Universals, is what specially distinguishes man from the lower animals. "They [the lower animals] possess but *Vorstellung*, not *Denken*," Stirling says in a letter written in 1869; "they only feel singles, they know no universals." The Law of Gravitation is, as it were, the Universal of matter—it is the uniformity exhibited by all material objects amid their endless diversity. The moon revolving in her pale, cold splendour round the earth; the river rushing from its source to the sea; the withered leaf fluttering from its parent stem to the ground—these, unlike perhaps in all else, are alike in exhibiting the influence of gravitation. Of each, the answer to the Why—Why does the moon revolve round the earth? Why does the river flow to the sea? Why does the leaf flutter to the ground?—is the same.

But the law of gravitation cannot explain *all that is*. Wide though it be in its application, it cannot embrace everything. It does not apply, for instance, to the realm of Spirit—to the thoughts, feelings,

[1] The *Secret of Hegel*, p. 54, 2nd edition. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

actions, of rational beings. Yet this realm, no less than the material world, has its laws, its uniformities, its *principles*—as Socrates tried to show when, under the teaching of the Sophists, the human world had become a formless chaos of subjective (individual) opinions and tastes; or as Kant set himself to prove when Hume had reduced all our knowledge—even our very selves—to a bundle of sensations. The coroner and jury sitting on the dead body found by the wayside, the physician examining his patient, the chemist amid his retorts in the laboratory, Robinson Crusoe gazing at the footsteps in the sand, the housewife puzzling over the broken fragments of her precious ornament, the cook reflectively tasting the spoiled dish, however unlike in occupations, pursuits, or character, are alike in their obedience to a law, which is of as universal application in the realm of thought as the law of gravitation in the material universe. Each—coroner, cook, housewife and the rest—is seeking a *cause* for the phenomenon before him, or her—for the death of the man, the breaking of the china, the spoiling of the dish, etc.—each is unconsciously obeying the law of causality, every change must have a cause. *Quot homines tot sententiæ* is true with regard to our tastes and opinions, our likes and dislikes—to all that is *subjective* in us (*i.e.* peculiar to us as individuals). Though it is true, however, that no two people are entirely alike in their tastes and opinions, it is equally true that, amid all the diversity of subjective likes and dislikes, behind the caprice of individual fads and fancies, there are discoverable *uniformities* in all intelligences—laws which all thinking beings obey. Was there ever a man who, seeing a scratch on his hand, did not ask himself what had caused it, or smelling the odour of singeing wool, did not look to see what was burning?

It was the door of Causality, so to speak, that gave entrance into the realm of modern constructive

philosophy; it was through that door that Kant passed into his system—a system of first principles, or Categories, as he called them—universal laws of thought—of which Causality is one. Kant, however, did not attempt to deduce his Categories, or first principles, from a single principle. He left them, as it were, side by side, inarticulated, "a mere catalogue." The special work of Hegel was to complete and articulate this "catalogue" of categories, or principles of thought, by finding a *first* principle, out of which the others could be seen to grow. Moreover, Kant's system of categories was applied only to *human* thought; Hegel saw in the categories, in the principles of thought, not merely part of the intellectual furniture of human beings, but "the universal principles of reason, which constitute the diamond net into the invisible meshes of which the material universe concretes itself." In so far as man is an Intelligence, he is an inlet to the universal reason, the laws of which he must obey; but these laws, or principles, are not the *property* of man—they are not merely *in him*—they are the basis and framework of the entire universe.

"It is quite certain that thought is as independently [of man] present in the universe as electricity. The world is but a *congeries of means to ends, and every example of such involves a thought.* The wing that beats the air is a thought; an eye that sees, a sense that feels, an articulation that moves, a pipe that runs, a scale that protects—all these, and myriads such—and they are thoughts—are as independent in nature as electricity."[1]

In the human world, we find thought expressing itself in a thousand ways, visible and invisible—in stone and wood and iron, in colours and sounds, in laws and institutions. It is the thought of the constructor that makes the iron vessel float upon the water; it is the thought of the general that wins the battle. In all these cases, too, the thought

[1] P. 130, 2nd edition of the *Secret.* The italics are ours.

precedes the expression, the materialization, as well as giving to the latter its value. Just as the human world, with its roads and cultivated fields, its streets and buildings, its machines and engines, its pictures and statuary, its colleges and hospitals, its libraries and orchestras, is the expression of the thought of man, so the vast universe, with its numberless worlds obedient to one law, and its countless forms of life, is the expression of the thought of God ; and just as in every case where human thought has expressed itself, the *conception* preceded the embodiment—as, for instance, the *plan* preceded the building, or the battle—so the thought of God must have preceded the creation of the universe. Thought is, in fact, necessarily the *prius* of a universe which is permeated, penetrated, by thought—which is built up on thought. And that the universe we know is built up on thought is proved every day by the discovery of new laws of nature. It is because the universe is permeated by thought that man can hope to understand it, to interpret it, by the light of reason; were it not *intelligible*, the work of the scientist — of the astronomer, the chemist, the geologist—would be idle.

"Here lies the germ of Hegel that initiated his whole system. The universe is but a materialization, but an externalization, but a heterization of certain thoughts: these may be named, these thoughts *are*, the thoughts of God. To take it so, God has *made* the world on these thoughts. In them, then, we know the thoughts of God, and, so far, God Himself." [1]

What has been said above is not to be taken as an attempt to summarize the philosophy of Hegel. All that is attempted here is to explain the sentence quoted from Stirling's letter; and this could be done only by giving a suggestion of the line which Hegel's thought follows, or, rather, perhaps, of the point from which it starts. The *Secret* is full of

[1] *Secret of Hegel*, p. 85, 2nd edition.

warnings not to imagine we have grasped the system of Hegel as soon as we have caught a glimpse of something intelligible. "It is necessary," we are told, "to know a Hegel close." The Hegelian system, like the Absolute, "cannot be *hopped* to by means of some cabalistic hocus-pocus. It must be worked up to."

Stirling has no faith in short-cuts—at any rate to the comprehension of any profound system of philosophy—and he has a wholesome objection to "general ideas" and "summaries," when these are made to take the place of a thorough, step-by-step study of any subject. Summaries are all very well in their place, "as useful synopses and reminders to those who have already mastered the whole subject in the entirety of its details"; but "when used independently," they "only propagate ignorance." He regards "this haste of ours nowadays" to clutch at what is, after all, only the appearance of comprehensive knowledge as "productive of most intolerable evils."

"A large class say, we do not want to go into the bottom of these things, we only want a general idea of them, we only want to be *well-informed people*. This does not appear unreasonable on the whole, and there are departments of knowledge where general ideas can be given, and where these ideas can be used very legitimately in conversation. But such general ideas are entirely impracticable as regards the modern philosophical *systems*. No general idea can convey these; they must be swallowed in whole and in every part—intellectually swallowed. . . . To say Kant's is the Transcendental or Critical Idealism; Fichte's the Subjective Idealism; Schelling's the Objective Idealism; and Hegel's the Absolute Idealism: this is as nearly as possible to say nothing! And yet people knowing this much and no more will converse, and discourse, and perorate, and decide conclusively upon the whole subject."[1]

It was on the 5th of January 1865 that the

[1] *Secret of Hegel*, p. 83, 2nd edition.

result of Stirling's years of labour saw the light. The correction of the proofs of the book he had found a very tedious and troublesome piece of work. Writing to his friend Cupples on the 29th of August 1864, he says: "I am quite sick for a run off to the Clyde, but cannot go in consequence of Proofs, Proofs, Proofs, Proofs. First vol. 465 pages in length, and introduction not yet printed, perhaps 85 more. Second vol. estimated to run to 612 pages, three or four sheets printed. I have had great difficulty with the Hegelian parts special—had to compare with MS.—then with original—then to read over by themselves—the Proofs I mean. It has been horrible. I have been from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. . . . The *jaloused* consternation of the printer here and there has amused me mightily." He adds that the miscellaneousness of the book, "or its disjectedness, rightly viewed, will be found to be just that of the ladder, or, better, of the stepping-stones, wanted."

Almost immediately on its appearance, the book met with an amount of success very remarkable for a work of such solidity, on a subject so obscure and profound. It was hailed by some of the more serious organs of the Press as "one of the most remarkable works on philosophy that has been seen for years," as a "monument of labour, erudition, perseverance, and thought," and as marking "a period in philosophical transactions," while its author was declared to be "a man not merely of large and thorough philosophical culture, but of strong, rugged, original powers of mind . . . a sterling, fearless love of truth; and the faith of a religious devotee in the possibilities of the Hegelian philosophy." "The critic, the historian, the sociologist, the physiologist, the student of natural science," it was said by one reviewer, "will find ideas in exploring after the secret of Hegel that will be useful in arresting other secrets."

What was even more remarkable than the favourable character of the reviews was the fact that the book, in spite of its two solid volumes, and its high price, had, for a work on philosophy by an unknown writer, an unusually large and rapid sale. Writing some two months after the appearance of the book, Stirling says: "Last Monday, a Mr Collyns Simon, a great Berkeleian, author of *Universal Immaterialism*, surprised me by a call to thank me, etc., etc., for my book. He said he met it everywhere in Edgh.—'they all had it'—. . . . Same day I met Dr Carlyle,[1] who told me he too found the book everywhere . . . that it was getting into the libraries, that there was a pressure on Edmonston & Douglas,[2] who had been obliged to get several copies, that he thought it must have sold 3 or 4 hundred copies, etc., etc."

A fortnight later he quotes, writing to Cupples, the following sentence from the letter of an Edinburgh correspondent: "It has given me great pleasure to hear from a friend of mine here that a stranger, who was here recently from London, had been saying that something like 500 copies of Mr Stirling's work on Hegel had been sold the first day. I sincerely hope this is true. He seemed to have his information from your publishers."

Stirling had the wisdom to receive this information without too much faith. "When I get my account in," he writes, "I only hope it will tally!" Of course, his incredulity was justified when the account did come in; but although it proved that the statement about the 500 copies was a gross exaggeration, still the actual number of copies sold was considerable for a book of the nature of the *Secret* by an unknown author. The author himself had no expectation that the book would prove

[1] Dr John Carlyle, brother of Thomas Carlyle.

[2] A firm of Edinburgh publishers, and owners of a fashionable circulating library.

successful from a pecuniary point of view. "For my part," he writes, "I do not think it will ever sell, but that it may bring notoriety—a notoriety of no value."

In these last words we seem to hear the voice of the philosopher, who knew well the worthlessness of the celebrity *of the moment*. Many of those who were reading, and talking about, the book, he was well aware, had been attracted to it by its appearance of novelty and strangeness, by the talk of others, or by expectations (which were bound to be disappointed) of having the secret of the universe laid bare before their eyes, as one exposes a juggler's tricks. When those people found that the gold did not reveal itself at the first scratch on the surface of the soil, but that they were required to labour with spade and pick-axe for months, perhaps for years, to reach it, they would, Stirling knew, conclude that there was no gold there, and go elsewhere to seek it.

If, however, the notoriety of the passing hour had no value in the eyes of the philosopher, he found great satisfaction in the thought of having accomplished what he regarded as important, and even necessary, work, in the attempt to accomplish which several able and gifted men had failed. "It is indeed something," he writes, "to have done what has not been done in England, France, or Germany, and by such men as Coleridge, De Quincey, Hamilton, Ferrier, to say nothing of Goethe and other Germans. The wonder is, as you will see, Schelling, however, who, with every advantage possible, studied Hegel for fifty years and failed."

It was also a source of deep gratification to him that his work was appreciated by those best able to judge, though, of course, he was not aware of this fact, in every case, until a considerable time after the publication of the *Secret*. George Cupples, for whose critical and literary faculty Stirling had the highest respect, wrote: "The whole work is in my

view a masterpiece—a *great* book. . . . The ease and fulness of philosophical expression in it—the power and wealth of illustration, comparison, assimilation, analogy, metaphor, literary filling out and accommodation and finish—are to my mind unique. The labour, the patience—the instinct for truth, and for metaphysical tracks and trails—the constant connection with life—these things continually rouse my admiration and delight." The American seer, Emerson, said of the book—though this was not till more than a year after its publication—"I have never seen any modern British book which appears to me to show such competence to analyse the most abstruse problems of the science, and, much more, such singular vigour and breadth of view in treating the matter in relation to literature and humanity. It exhibits a general power of dealing with the subject, which, I think, must compel the attention of readers in proportion to their strength and subtlety." Carlyle, the Master, Teacher, Prophet of Stirling's earlier years, expressed the conviction that the author of the *Secret* was "the one man in Britain capable of bringing Metaphysical Philosophy, in the ultimate, German or European, and highest actual form of it, distinctly home to the understanding of British men." The German Erdmann, who had sat at Hegel's feet, and was himself the author of several philosophical works, wrote to Stirling as to one more deep in his knowledge of Hegelian philosophy than himself. T. H. Green, Fellow of Balliol College, and leader of the group of so-called "Little Hegelians" in England, expressed the opinion that the *Secret* "not only contrasts with everything else that has been published in England about it [the Hegelian philosophy] as sense with nonsense, but that it is such a true and thorough exposition of the development of German philosophy as could have been put forth by no one not possessed of the highest speculative ability, and of that 'tran-

scendent faculty of taking pains' which is said to constitute genius."

Like Stirling, Green had a profound conviction of the importance of a thorough knowledge of German philosophy. According to him, without such knowledge, "a writer is outside the main stream of European thought." In expressing this opinion, he was, of course, saying, less impressively, what Stirling has already been quoted as saying — that the German philosophers, "negatively or affirmatively, required to be understood *before an advance was possible for us.*"

These last words suggest what was the source of the deepest satisfaction to Stirling on the completion of his great work. It was not the fact that he had almost at once become a celebrity; it was not the thought that he had succeeded in doing what many able men had failed to accomplish, nor even that he had gained the respect and admiration of such men as Erdmann, Emerson, and Carlyle. It was the knowledge that he had, as he would have said himself, assimilated the Historic Pabulum— that he had succeeded in absorbing and making his own what he believed to be the intellectual and spiritual food appointed for the nourishment of the age, without which Man could not grow to his full stature. All the faults and weaknesses of the time he held to be due to "neglect of the Pabulum"— to the fact that Europe had "continued to nourish itself from the vessel of Hume, notwithstanding that the *Historic Pabulum* has long since abandoned it for another and others." Replying to an objection brought against the *Secret* that it contained "political references," he writes:—

"What political references? There are none such *as* such—only allusions to first principles. I want just a general picture to emerge of the *Aufklärung*—and I want it to be seen that all results from neglect of the Historic Pabulum. There is," he concludes impressively, "*a one pabulum.*"

CHAPTER XI

1865-1867

Literary Friends—Dr Carlyle—Visit from Thomas Carlyle—Holiday in France—Sir Evan Mackenzie—Publication of *Analysis of Sir W. Hamilton*—Candidature for Chair in Glasgow University—Letter from Carlyle—From Emerson—Emerson and the *Secret*—Pecuniary Losses—Degree of LL.D., Edin., conferred on Stirling—Publication of his *Schwegler*—Note on the *Sophists*—*Subjectivity* and *Objectivity*—Publication of Articles in *Macmillan* and the *Fortnightly*—Letter from Carlyle—Emerson's Appreciation of *Schwegler*

Besides other more important results mentioned in last chapter, the publication of the *Secret* brought its author the acquaintanceship of many interesting people. Within a few months after the appearance of the book, several of the representatives of learning in Edinburgh had called on Stirling, amongst others, Professor Campbell Fraser, who occupies with respect to the Irish philosopher, Berkeley, a position similar to that which Stirling holds with regard to Hegel. In a letter, dated June 1, 1865, there occurs this allusion to the meeting of the two: "Professor Fraser called on me, and I since on him. I find him deep-thinking."

A month or two earlier, there is mention of a call, or calls, from Dr John Carlyle, brother of the Chelsea sage. "As in duty bound," Stirling writes, "I dropped my pasteboard on Dr Carlyle in return for his, so doubly courteous. Last night he came down, smoked a pipe, and took a 2nd moderate tumbler with me. He was vastly pleasant, cordial, easy. . . . We talked, of course, *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*. . . . I had a good many anecdotes from him of Wilson, De Quincey, John Stuart Mill,

Froude, etc. A good deal about his brother. He says he only got £40 out of his *Dante*, and, I think, 50 copies."

Later (in August of the same year) Carlyle himself paid a visit to Edinburgh, and, along with his brother, called on Stirling, who, in a letter to George Cupples, gives the following short account of the meeting with his old master: "The great author has decidedly aged; but he still seems pretty strong. He talked very hearty and cheery —a long time to my wife. We had the 'age,' and quite a lot of fellows through hands: my analyses always seemed to hit his own thought. . . . T. C. and the Dr were going to bathe at Portobello, whither I accompanied them. They forgot their pipe-cases at my house, and I had to send William[1] up with them. He was asked in, talked with, and in going away, T. C. said to him, 'Tell your papa I am very glad I called on him.'"

Early in the year, after the completion of his work, and the appearance of the *Secret*, Stirling had allowed himself a brief holiday in France, where he paid a short visit to his friend of St Servan days, Sir Evan Mackenzie. Sir Evan, who had some literary tastes, had been attracted to Stirling, as the weaker and less gifted man often is by one of original intellect and fearless independence of character, and had formed a warm friendship for him. After meeting Stirling, he had discarded the band of crape which he had worn for some time on his sleeve in mourning for his friend, Major Nolan, whose tragic death, while attempting to avert the catastrophe of the fatal Charge of the Five Hundred, is so vividly described by Kinglake in his *History of the Crimean War*. The friendship, in one way at least, proved unfortunate for Stirling. Mackenzie, who, though he had succeeded to the family title, was not, at that time, in possession of the family

[1] Stirling's eldest son.

estate, had accepted the position of salaried manager of a wine company—the Beaujolais Wine Company —which afterwards failed, and had induced Stirling, who had as little "business" faculty as philosophers usually possess, to invest in it some £900, which of course was lost. Writing to Cupples on May 7, 1865, Stirling says: "The danger in which my £900 stands with the Beaujolais Coy. makes me think sourly of this other outlay. £1300 without return must tell on my big household."

Within a year of the appearance of the *Secret*, Stirling's next book, an analysis of the philosophy of Sir William Hamilton, was published (on October 25, 1865). Though it appeared after the *Secret*, the *Hamilton* was, as the author explains in the preface, really written some time before it. What he actually published, moreover, was only a *portion* of the analysis which he had planned and partly written. According to the plan, his examination of Hamilton's philosophy consisted of *four parts*:— I. Analysis of Hamilton's Theory of Perception; II. The philosophy of the *Conditioned;* III. Hamilton's Logic; and IV., a general conclusion. Of the four parts, only the first was published—the rest remains still in MS., and more or less fragmentary. The reasons for the publication of Part I., and Part I. alone, are stated in the preface to be that "It (Part I.) will of itself, probably, suffice to justify, on the whole, the conclusions[1] spoken of as already before the public; and it is solely with a view to this justification that it is published. The other parts are, for the present, suppressed, in submission to the temper of the time, and in consideration of the intervention, on the same subject, and, as I understand, with similar results, of my more distinguished contemporary, Mr Mill. I am sensible at the same time," the writer

[1] The allusion is to certain criticisms of Hamilton, which occur in the *Secret*, and gave offence to his friends and admirers.

adds, "that this partial publication is, in every point of view but the one indicated, unjust to myself."

The *Hamilton* is, of course, a work of infinitely less general importance than the *Secret;* but it affords an excellent example of Stirling's critical, or controversial, style. It is exhaustive, incisive, subtle, and supported at every step by abundant proof. As one critic of the time remarked of it, it deals "a blow to Sir W. Hamilton's doctrine of perception more ponderous than that dealt by Mr Mill; for it is a blow struck from a higher altitude, and directed by an eye that commands a wider range than Mr Mill's."

Some months after the publication of the *Hamilton*, an article by Stirling on the same subject, entitled, "Was Sir William Hamilton a Berkeleian?" appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*. It is not necessary to enter here into a discussion of the question dealt with both in the book and in the article—namely, Hamilton's "Theory of Perception"—but it seems worth while to quote the following paragraph from the article, as giving Stirling's general summary of the course of philosophy in Britain since Hume reduced all knowledge to a bundle of sensations :—

> "Let us bring home the lesson here. From Hume in consequence of his queries in the *Treatise of Human Nature*, there have descended two lines of thinkers in Great Britain; one irenical, culminating in Mr Mill; one polemical, culminating in—shall we say?—Sir William Hamilton. But of both lines the efforts have been *nil;* both return exhausted to the queries of the *Treatise of Human Nature;* and as Hume left Philosophy in Great Britain, so in Great Britain Philosophy remains."

In short, according to Stirling's opinion, the Philosophic Succession, as far as Great Britain was concerned, had ended with Hume, after whom philosophic thought in that country had wandered

into by-paths, which ended in *impasses*. It was in Germany that the great Scottish philosopher found his true successors; it was a German who took the torch from his hand, and carried it along the great highway.

One would have thought that, with two philosophical works published in the same year, not to mention the article which appeared in the *Fortnightly* some months later, Stirling must have been sufficiently well occupied; but in February 1866 we find him writing: "Am doing nothing, and can't find anything to do — think I shall off to Buenos Ayres to grow sheep's fleeces for my children."

Two months later, however, he writes that he is "busy," having found at least temporary occupation in his candidature for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University. In his candidature he had some very strong support, including that of Thomas Carlyle, who gave him an excellent testimonial, which was accompanied by the following friendly letter:—

"Scotsbrig, 18 *April* 1866.

"Dear Sir,—I have written you a small testimonial; and shall be very glad if it can help you,—it or anything else in my power; but there is nothing else I can think of.

"Professor Lushington is a frank, loyal kind of man: if you don't know him, my brother does, and will present you to him, which might have good effects, or tend that way. Did you controvert John Mill, or take his side, in your late pamphlet?[1] I fear, the former. John Mill is grown very whimsical latterly (I hear); but you might write to him, and perhaps his generosity would prompt him

[1] Stirling had published no "pamphlet" in 1866. The allusion can only be to the *Hamilton*.

favourably.—Professor Masson has come nearer the scene, and may now, also, have a word to say: he is a thoroughly kind-hearted man.

"On the whole, use your best diligence; and succeed if possible. It will give me real pleasure to learn that you do; it seems the career of all others fitted for you. T. CARLYLE."

From Emerson, too, with whom he had previously had no correspondence, Stirling received a very strong testimonial, a sentence of which was quoted in last chapter. The testimonial was enclosed in the following cordial and appreciative letter:—

"CONCORD, MASSTTS.
8 *May* 1866.

"DEAR SIR,—I have this morning received a note from Mr G. S. Phillips of Chicago, in which he informs me that you are a candidate for a Chair in the University of Glasgow, that the election takes place this month, and that you would like to add a word from me to the testimonials offered on your part. I am delighted with both facts—the candidateship, and with the request with which you honour me, and, on the instant, have written the enclosed note, though in entire ignorance of the forms. If you choose to send it in, you will prefix the proper address.

"I have been so much indebted to your book, which your publishers were so good, or so kindly advised, as to send me, and which I carried with me on a long journey, that, I suppose, it would have been an honest gratitude to have written you long since some direct word. But I am a slow and interrupted reader, and have not yet done with the book. I am all the more gratified with this sudden occasion of coming for the moment into more direct intercourse with you.—With great regard,

"R. W. EMERSON."

The "long journey" mentioned in this letter is probably the same as that referred to in the following extract from an article entitled "A Day with Emerson," which appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine* for November 1882 :—

"Whether to divert me from attention to the track which I wished him to pursue, or to direct my attention to an author who has powerfully influenced philosophic thought, he [Emerson] went to his portmanteau and took out two stout octavo volumes, *The Secret of Hegel* by Stirling, with some remark concerning the value of the doctrines of this great German thinker. He confessed that he was studying the work on his travels, and that he supposed few men living had actually mastered the subject. He did not read to me a single sentence, nor refer to any particular part of it; but, with a volume in his hand, which he held in a sort of caressing way, and opened here and there as if it contained a treasure, kept on his rhythmic talk."

It would surely be impossible to imagine a stronger tribute to the value of Stirling's work than the fact that a man of Emerson's pre-eminence in learning and intellectual insight should find, in the contents of the "two stout octavo volumes," a sufficient recompense for the trouble of carrying them about with him on a long journey!

In spite of the fact that Stirling was the author of an epoch-making book, and that he had the support of the two writers whom it is perhaps not too much to call the most distinguished of their day, the Glasgow electors decided to appoint Mr Edward Caird, at that time Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, who, some fifteen years younger than Stirling, had not yet published anything of importance, though, later, he was the author of several well-known philosophical works.

The following letter, written by Stirling thirty-five years later to a correspondent to whom reference has already been made in an earlier chapter—the Rev. John Snaith—throws an interesting and character-

istic side-light on some of the circumstances connected with his candidature for the Glasgow Chair:—

"I am glad you are a little reconciled to 'puir auld Scotland' in my reference. I think I could reconcile you even more in that respect. For instance, when I called, as Candidate for a Chair, on the late ——— [one of the electors], I conversed with him a long time cosily by his fire, and being younger then, I thought I rather took him by my chat. At all events, when I rose to go, and we both stood by the fire, he said, 'But, ah, Mr Stirling, you don't ask me for my pledge.' And I answered, 'Oh, no, I should not think of that!' Such a donkey as that could never get a Chair! Had I accepted his pledge, I am pretty sure, looking back on the electors, that I should have had a majority. My very supporters knew what a fool I was. They would say to each other, 'You know what he is, he won't canvass!' And all in Edinburgh goes by canvassing—all in Scotland, I suppose: the whole hive is up when there is question of money to be got.

"There remains, then, only your complaint against the public for not knowing me; but you know Socrates himself complained he was poor from his service of the God! I suppose Herbert Spencer may make something by physics; but who will ever make anything by metaphysics, and especially such metaphysics as mine?"

In this case, as in that of Stirling's early letter to Carlyle and his later comment on it, it is both interesting and instructive to see the criticism of age on (comparative) youth.

At the time, Stirling accepted his failure with equanimity. "I was not at all sanguine," he wrote to Cupples, "and am not disappointed, though it would be a great relief to me to find a *quid pro quo* in reference to possible losses . . . at the hands of

the B.jolais Coy. . . . I have been bitten by the N.B. Railway to the tune of £250 a year. I cannot allow ourselves to eat up capital, so, if I cannot make it up by literature, I shall go to sea as a surgeon."

Fortunately, the improvement of the affairs of the railway company, which had been passing through a period of depression, made the taking of any such desperate step as that mentioned above unnecessary.

At the spring Graduation ceremonial of Edinburgh University in 1867, the degree of LL.D. was conferred on Stirling. "I am the only one this year," he writes,—"the only one in Mental Science since Mansel." At the time the degree was conferred, he was busily occupied with his translation of Schwegler's *History of Philosophy*, which appeared in the autumn of the same year, and has remained ever since—for forty-three years—the favourite text-book for students of philosophy. The book is more than a mere translation, Stirling's Annotations, appended to the translation, having been said by experts to constitute the most valuable part of it. In the first edition, the annotations occupied a comparatively small space; but in successive editions, they were expanded, and ultimately their length was almost doubled.

Even in the first edition, however, there is to be found the long note on the Sophists, which Stirling believed to contain a summary of what is perhaps the most important outcome of philosophy. In beginning the note, he impressively calls the attention of the reader to its contents, "for it is here," he asserts, "that we begin to get a clear view of *the* lesson of philosophy—the distinction, namely, between subjectivity and objectivity, and our consequent duty."

In the course of the foregoing pages, allusion has been made, on several occasions, to this distinc-

tion; but perhaps it may be well, for the benefit of any reader not familiar with it, to give here some explanation of the sense in which the words *subjective* and *objective*, *subjectivity* and *objectivity*, are used by Hegel and Stirling, for it is a sense substantially different from that in which the words are current in the works of British writers. In the common use of the words, *objective* is what belongs to the *object*, or the thing known, *subjective* is what pertains to the *subject*, or the person who knows. It is not with this meaning that they are used by Stirling and the German philosophers whom he followed.

In Chapter VIII. of this Memoir, it may be remembered, the position of the Greek Sophists was indicated in a sentence. To put it shortly, the main tenet of the school (if they can be said to form a school) was what Hegel and Stirling would call the *Principle of Subjectivity*, expressed by their founder in the dictum, "Man is the measure of all things." According to this principle, everything *is* just what it *appears* to each individual. Each individual is the measure of truth or falsity, of right or wrong, to himself. What is true or right for one individual, is true or right *for him*, but not necessarily for anyone else. There is nothing necessarily true for every intelligence — nothing necessarily right or wrong for every moral agent. The Sophists, in fact, denied the possibility of an *objective* (universal) standard of truth or morality.

Perhaps it will be seen from this statement in what sense Hegel uses the words *subjective* and *objective*. According to his usage, subjective is that which is *peculiar to the individual as an individual*—his personal opinions, tastes, idiosyncrasies, *bias*—while, on the other hand, that is objective which holds good *for every intelligence*. "Subjective truth is truth for this subject, *or* that subject. Objective truth is truth for this subject,

and that subject. Evidently, then, objective truth is independent of the subject *as* subject."

The distinction is similar to that which was expressed by Plato, and others of the Greek philosophers, in the words *opinion* (δόξα) and *true knowledge* (ἐπιστήμη). According to Plato, the whole business of life is the attainment of true knowledge, but the ordinary man is content to sit "in the sediments of the universe," and mistake the water over his head for the sky, knowing nothing of the blue heaven beyond, nor of the splendour of the sunlight undimmed by its passage through a denser medium. Here, the water through which the ordinary man is represented as seeing the light, corresponds to what Hegel would call his *subjectivity*—that which is peculiar to him as an individual. The white light of truth envelops the universe, but the individual minds through which it passes, like prisms in the path of the sunlight, bend and refract, and break it up into coloured rays, each seeing only *part* of the truth, and seeing it distorted by its own *subjectivity*. As, however, it is possible to obtain what scientists call *achromatism*—to restore the refracted sunbeam to whiteness—by passing it through a combination of prisms, so *objective* truth may be reached by finding what is true for this man *and* that man *and* every man. Examples of such truths—*objective* truths—are the following:—Every change must have a cause; two things which are equal to a third thing are equal to each other; the straight line is the shortest way between two points. Every intelligence yields to these principles an obedience as unhesitating as that which every particle of matter in the Universe yields to the law of gravitation.

In the sentence quoted from his Annotation to the "Sophists," Stirling remarks that there devolves on us a "duty" consequent on the distinction of subjectivity and objectivity. This duty is twofold:

in the world of thought, it involves the ridding ourselves of all intellectual bias, of all merely subjective opinions; in the practical world—in our daily life—it necessitates the subordination of subjective feeling, *self*-will, to objective Will—the Universal. In its application to *conduct*, this distinction of subjective and objective formed the favourite theme of Stirling's Sunday evening talks with his family. No words were more familiar to them than these two; and no duty was more often, or more urgently, impressed on them than the duty of subordinating their subjective self-will to the Universal.

Besides the *Schwegler*, there appeared, in the month of October 1867, two short articles from Stirling's pen—the one, in *Macmillan's Magazine*, entitled the *Symbolism of the Sublime*, being a translation of a portion of Hegel's *Æsthetic* with notes by the translator, while the other, *De Quincey and Coleridge upon Kant*, was an exposé of the falsity of the claims of the two British writers to a knowledge of the German philosopher.

With regard to the first of these articles, as it is only to be found in a back number—a very far back number!—of a magazine, it is perhaps permissible to quote a sentence from the note which heads the article, as it seems to afford a simple summary, in Stirling's words, of Hegel's general position :—

"Hegel's general object is best named, perhaps, when we say that he *sought thought everywhere*, with the resolution of demonstrating that this thought did not exist only unconnectedly here and there, as mere pleasing or surprising signs of intelligence, but that it *constituted a system*—a vast, organic, complete system—but still a system that referred itself to the unity of a single living pulse. With this general aim, he naturally found himself under an obligation to construe not only the present but the past. History became to him a very important portion of his problem, and he was compelled to philosophize it from various points of view. Of these religion was the most

important . . . he was led to present religion as a single subject gradually developing itself from Fetichism upwards, till the time was ripe and Revelation vouchsafed. The progress of art Hegel views as having been similarly conditioned—as having always constituted, indeed, but an accessory of religion. While man was yet absorbed in, and identified with, nature through the mere necessities of hunger, etc., art there could be none. Art could only begin when, in stepping back from nature, and looking at it on its own account as different from himself, man first felt wonder. Thenceforward the attempt would be to understand this different thing—that is, to reduce its difference into his own identity. But such attempt is necessarily accompanied by the desire to express."

Of Stirling's criticism of De Quincey and Coleridge in their relation to Kant, it is only necessary to say that it has been completely confirmed by subsequent advance in the knowledge of the German philosopher. Any student of philosophy nowadays who has even a superficial knowledge of the work of Kant is aware that the entire industry, the entire object, of that philosopher was *constructive*, yet this is how he is described by De Quincey :—

"He was called, by one who weighed him well, the *Alles-zermalmender*, the world-shattering Kant. He could destroy; his intellect was essentially destructive. He had no instincts of creation or restoration within his Apollyon mind . . . he exulted in the prospect of absolute and ultimate annihilation."

It seems worth while to quote here the last sentence of Stirling's essay—if for no other reason, at least because it is so characteristic of the writer.

"Our general lesson, then, is now obvious. To the genius-airs, and genius-flights, and genius-indulgences of De Quincey and Coleridge, we oppose as well the industry, the ingenuousness, and the modesty of Kant, as the silence, the self-restriction, and the iron toil of Hegel."

Carlyle's opinion of the matter is expressed in the following letter to Stirling:—

"CHELSEA, 8 *Oct.* 1867.

"DEAR SIR,—Thanks for your attention in sending me the *Fortnightly*. I had already read your paper there with interest and entertainment, and dismissed my own No. on its further travels; but now am glad, for your sake, to look into the Quincey-Coleridge matter again.

"It is an able Paper, agreeable to read, and may have its uses with many. You have made it clear as noonday that neither De Quincey nor Coleridge had read anything considerable of Kant, or really *knew* anything of him at all, and that poor De Q.'s picture of him is completely and even ridiculously a *minus* quantity, — which it were charitable to bury under ground! With Coleridge it goes still worse. . . . Kant, in whose *letters*, etc., I have been reading lately (with considerable weariness for most part) seems to me in *spiritual* stature too what he was in bodily, 'not above 5 feet 2'! Essentially a *small*, most methodic, clear and nimble man;—very like that portrait in *Schubert*, I should think; the fine, sharp, cheery, honest eyes, brow, intellect; and then those projected (quizzically cautious, etc., etc.) *lips*, and that weak, receding, poor chin. Not an *Alles-zermalmender* the least in the world, but much rather a *Gar-manches-zernagender!* Who was it that first gave him the other epithet?—Will you tell me, too, where *is* that about the *starry firmament* and *sense of right and wrong*, which has dwelt with me for many years, but only at second hand.

"I also read the bit of *Hegel* in *Macmillan;* found it throughout intelligible, and surely very *well* translated.—Yours sincerely,

"T. CARLYLE."

Replying to this letter (on Oct. 22, 1867) Stirling says: "I fear to transcend all the usual conventional proprieties, were I to allow myself to express at full to you how sweet to me is your recognition of my little efforts lately. I will simply appeal to your understanding of this from your recollection of my relations to you when a lad of eighteen—relations which on my part have only deepened with years. I shall leave this attractive emotional ground to answer the questions with which you have honoured me.

"If you will refer to page 121 of Part XII. of Rosenkranz and Schubert's edition of the works of Kant, you will find—with the other circumstances—that it was Mendelssohn who called Kant 'den Alles-zermalmenden.' Again, if you will refer to page 312 of Part VIII. of the same work, you will find that the Beschluss of the Kritik of Practical Reason constitutes the passage to which you allude with reference to the 'starry heavens and the moral law.'

"As for Kant, acknowledging the rare incision of your touches, I would only deprecatingly say that his letters are mostly conventional, *wersh* and wearisome because he is already old, and addressing generally mere admiring *outsides*. Then the element in which he lived, though he is not without many a genuine grasp of the concrete, was mainly abstract and formal; yet the inexhaustible fertility with which he applied himself, not only to the metaphysical, but also to the ethical, question and questions of Hume is verily wonderful. He was a *true* soul, simple, kindly, social, not without humour, if a little old-maidenish, precise and garrulous. One can see that Hamann, a very interesting strange character, an erring, volcanic nature that could find its repose only in the *Gährung* of undistinguished *Substanz*, would like to make out Kant to have been too prim and strict, too much devoted to dis-

tinctions, and the linked results of labour and scientific demonstration. Yet this Hamann, with all his want of sympathy, with all his preference of what might seem to him inspiration, we find obliged to write not only kindly of Kant, but with an involuntary respect that is not without a tinge of awe in it. He styles Kant 'wirklich ein dienstfertiger, und im Grunde gut und edel gesinnter Mann von Talenten und Verdiensten.' He speaks of Kant's 'Vertraulichkeit,' of his 'good character which nobody can deny him,' and exclaims that 'his poor head is to Kant's a broken pot—clay to iron'! I like to look into a man through his own actions and his own words, but I am sure you will much enjoy the whole story of the relations of Hamann and Kant, which begins foot of page 79 of the second sub-part of the 11th part of R. and S.'s edition.

"It is very pleasing to me that you like Schwegler. His quarry, however, is mostly Hegel. The Plato and Aristotle are nearly perfect, and the best of the book. Descartes, Locke, Leibnitz, Spinoza, etc., are very successful. I am least contented with the Hume. The Fichte also is very good, and the Kant, with a few deductions, most excellent. The Logic of Hegel is shortened, or fore-shortened, almost into caricature, and the other portions have too much the character of extended contents. But 'III.—the Philosophy of Spirit' gives a true glimpse throughout, especially under '2. The Objective Spirit.' That portion is a reduction of at least two volumes, but it contains matter most excellent for the present time, and which I think will not be without Zusagen for you. —Thanking you very, very cordially, forgive me subscribing myself, yours affectionately,

"J. H. Stirling."

Of the *Schwegler*, the opinion of Emerson was no less favourable than that of Carlyle. Writing

to Stirling on June 1, 1868, the great American writer says, after modestly disclaiming the right to criticize on the ground of ignorance of metaphysics: "I found on trial that I too could read it [the *Schwegler*], and with growing appetite. I could at least appreciate well enough the insight and sovereignty of the Annotations, and the consummate address with which the contemporary critics and contestants are disposed of, etc."

In a postscript to the letter, he adds :—

"My friend W. T. Harris, Esq., of St Louis, Missouri, Editor of the 'Journal of Speculative Philosophy,'[1] writes me thus :—

"'I forward by this mail the copy of *Schwegler* which you were so kind as to lend me. I have examined the book sufficiently to convince myself that Mr Stirling's labours in the way of rendering the text and of annotating the same are very valuable. Mr Stirling is the most happy of all modern writers in his power to awaken in the student of philosophy that immense faith which is indispensable to the one who will master the speculative thinking.'"

The above estimate of the book has been fully endorsed by the opinion of later critics. Forty-three years after its publication, Stirling's translation of *Schwegler*, with his Annotations, is still the favourite handbook of English-speaking students of philosophy all over the world.

[1] Afterwards Minister of Education for the U.S.A. Government.

CHAPTER XII

1868

Address on Materialism—Review of Browning—Vindication of Hegel against Whewell and others—Candidature for Philosophy Chair in Edinburgh—Letters from Carlyle

THE year 1868 was a very full one in the life of Stirling. In January, he published his volume of *Essays* on Jerrold, Tennyson, Macaulay and others, of which individually some mention has already been made in the previous pages. In March, he delivered an address, to an audience of medical students in Edinburgh, on the subject of *Materialism in Relation to the Study of Medicine*. Afterwards published at the request of the society under whose auspices it was delivered, the address is partly a clear, incisive argument by a man possessed of a professional knowledge of physiology, and partly an eloquent appeal on the part of the philosopher on behalf of the immaterial, the spiritual, the Ideal. As the main argument contained in the address bears, to a large extent, on the same subject as its author's *As regards Protoplasm*, it is thought best to reserve it for discussion, along with the latter, in a later chapter, and meantime to glance at some of Stirling's other work during the year 1868.

It was in that year that his review of Browning appeared in the *North British Review*—a periodical now extinct. As a work of literary art, this review would no doubt be regarded by most critics as much inferior to the essay on Tennyson, of which it is not too much to say that it is one of the most *poetic* critiques ever written on any poet. Compared with the latter, the Browning seems like prose compared

with poetry—like a series of disconnected chords on the piano compared with one continuous and complete burst of harmony. It is an interesting study to compare the two articles, and note how the style of the critic appears to reflect the qualities which he finds in his respective subjects, the *Tennyson* affording an example of that "single flight in one full swoop, the one and ever-ascending gust of genius," which he regards as characteristic of the work of the author of *Maud* and the *Idylls of the King*, while the *Browning* has something of the ruggedness, abruptness, and harshness which its writer finds in the pages of the poet who will "always say, and not sing."

It is only fair to Stirling, however, to mention that, of the two styles, it was that of the *Browning* which he himself preferred. In a letter to Dr Ingleby (dated Nov. 19, 1869), he writes: "You are quite right: I have no object but to get my thought *out*. Still my sentences are—on the whole, say—connected enough (consequent duly attached to antecedent), genuine enough, and whole enough. . . . Where I like myself best for Style is in the *Hamilton;* my paper on Browning and this on Protoplasm are not dissimilar. The *Browning* I like very much, and was amused to hear of a very ancient friend of mine exclaiming after reading it, 'What a pity it is that he has lost his fine style!' (As in *Jerrold*, *Tennyson*, and *Macaulay*.)"

Whatever the reader of the Browning article may think of its style, he will readily admit that, on every page, it affords evidence of its writer's possession of the two essential conditions of good criticism —sympathy and discrimination. It has been the lot of Browning—more, perhaps, than of most writers—to be the victim of undiscriminating praise, as well as of undiscriminating abuse. The truth is, that for a poet, Browning is, as the phrase goes, a hard nut to crack; and while, on the one hand,

there are some who, too lazy or incompetent to crack it, declare it is empty or rotten, there are others, possessed of unusual powers of mastication, who crunch down shell and kernel together, and swallow both with equal relish. As a critic of Browning, Stirling shows that he belongs to neither of those classes; though he is fully sensible of the hardness of the *shell*, he is keenly alive to the *freshness*, the wholesomeness, and the rare flavour of the *kernel*. A newspaper reviewer, writing of the *Browning* article at the time it appeared, says of it: "The writer of this article has evidently dug into the very heart of Browning, and surveys the works of the great poet from that central point looking outwards. He has given us here as the result a sample of a kind of criticism not very common in these degenerate days."

As the article deals chiefly with the poems individually, and not so much with Browning's characteristics in general, it is not easy to find a passage suitable for quotation. Perhaps, however, the following brief passage will serve as an example of the style in which it is written. In the passage, the critic is speaking of the *Flight of the Duchess*, which in spite of an enthusiastic admiration for *Luria*, *The Soul's Tragedy*, and many of the shorter pieces, he regards as Browning's *chef d'œuvre*. (It must be remembered that, in 1868, the *Ring and the Book*, and several of Browning's longer poems, had not yet appeared; but it is doubtful whether Stirling saw reason later to change his opinion.)

"That premised, we say at once that we ground our preference of this poem for the first place among the products of Browning on the newness and elaboration of its form, with special consideration of its length. The newness of the vein alluded to is seen at once in the opening thirty lines. The peculiar racy bluntness, and the peculiar racy speech contained in those lines, were for the first time heard in England when this poem was published thirty years ago. . . . The tone of the piece

is indeed externally light; but that must not tempt us to assign to it a subordinate class. We have here a tragedy, but—as might be its course in real life—transacted in the everyday language of comedy. We seem in it to be presented with a piece of humanity just as it occurs . . . and the player that represents it is an honest huntsman, bluff and blunt, and with a genuine ring in him. . . . Indeed, this poem . . . is not more valuable for what it directly tells, than for the reflex that falls back from it on the simple narrator—this hale, sun-tanned, weather-proven, perfect sample of bluff humanity. . . . The pitch of blunt colloquial ease, with the sound of reality in every tone of it, is caught from the first, and fairly preserved to the very last word. . . . What a free grace, too, what a charm of methodic unmethodicness, what a fascinating picturesqueness there is in those double rhymes, and free, loose lines! There is indeed a very perfection of rhymes here—a very perfection of verse, a very perfection of art. The labour that realized this poem must have been simply enormous."

In what has been said in the foregoing pages with regard to Stirling's work during the year 1868, variety of occupation has perhaps been sufficiently indicated; but before the year was ended, his attention was attracted in yet another new direction—from Browning and poetry to Hegel and the borderland between metaphysics and physics—by feeling himself called on to defend the German philosopher from a charge brought against him from the side of mathematico-physical science. From this charge and Stirling's repudiation of it, there arose a controversy between him and Mr W. Robertson Smith (at that time assistant to the professor of Physics in Edinburgh University, afterwards better known as Orientalist and Biblical critic), which was carried on at infrequent intervals by means of letters in the *Courant* newspaper, a paper read before the Royal Society, and two articles in the *Fortnightly Review.*

Like most newspaper controversies, this one might be best passed over in silence, but for one or two reasons which make it neither quite possible,

nor (from the point of view of Stirling's biographer) quite desirable, wholly to ignore it. The chief of those reasons is the fact that Stirling himself gave to the substance of the controversy a more permanent expression than could be found in newspaper letters by publishing, in 1873, along with his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Law*, a *Vindication of Hegel in a Physico-mathematical Regard*. Of this *Vindication*, the greater portion is occupied with a defence of Hegel from the charges brought against him by Dr Whewell; but the objections of Mr Robertson Smith are also dealt with in it; and it therefore seems to be necessary at least to indicate the general character of the defence which Stirling offers for Hegel against both attacks.

Stated broadly, the charge both of Dr Whewell and Mr Robertson Smith against Hegel was that he had ventured to attack Newton on the latter's own special ground, and had even attempted to substitute, for the Newtonian Calculus and the Law of Gravitation, some theory or explanation of his own. By a writer in *Nature* of Nov. 10, 1871, the charge was exaggerated into the monstrous statement that Hegel had "proved that Newton did not understand fluxions, nor even the law of gravitation"!

As the recognized interpreter of Hegel, Stirling naturally felt it to be his duty to clear his master from a charge calculated, as was this, to cast discredit upon him. In substance, his defence was that both Hegel's language and Hegel's object, in the passages in his works referred to in support of the charge against him, had been misunderstood. As has been frequently pointed out in the foregoing pages, Hegel spoke a language of his own—a language intelligible only to the initiated—which it had taken Stirling years of hard study thoroughly to understand. It was not wonderful, then, that a reader who was not completely at home with the system of Hegel should misunderstand the meaning and object

of passages taken at random from his works; and, as Stirling proved by abundant examples, Whewell's translations from Hegel showed that he was utterly, even ludicrously, in the dark as to the philosopher's language and system. And this is no less true in the case of Mr Robertson Smith.

Throughout the controversy, Stirling's object was not to maintain that Hegel was correct in his interpretation of Newton, but to show that Hegel himself was neither understood nor correctly stated. Writing to Dr Ingleby in April 1873, he says:—

"Now, the question with me is, not, Is Hegel correct?—but Is Smith (or Whewell) correct about Hegel? In regard to Smith, I show in my 'Green book' that Smith is *diametrically* wrong simply in his *naming* of the matter in Hegel. That is my whole business, and wherever I come to any doubtful point—(and at this moment I recollect only one such) . . . I content myself by setting down what Hegel really says side by side with what Smith says, quite willing that what is a blunder on the part of Hegel should be called that. When what Hegel really says is seen, I am quite willing that it should be gone in at, and should stand on its own merits. Probably that Kepler allusion does involve a blunder to Hegel—nay, perhaps I may object to Hegel's metaphysique of the Calculus, once it comes to that—but it has not come to that. What drops from Smith in any such general application is but wandering and uncertain, and has no validity beside all those endless and extraordinary blunders of his. It is those blunders of Smith's that constitute my whole business—in the Green book. . . . Let Hegel be really wrong, you will never find any attempt in me to throw them out in saying so, or *for* saying so—I show up only what they [Whewell and Smith] wrongly say."

It was in consequence of the want of comprehension of Hegel's language and objects, that

statements in his writings were regarded as scientific criticisms which were, in truth, only *translations* into his own peculiar philosophical dialect, or dialectic, of scientific laws, *accepted by him as such from the scientist, without question.* Philosophy, as the *scientia scientiarum*, has to deal with the principles which lie at the root of *all* science. "That is just what metaphysic is—the ultimate sifting and searching of all the other sciences; and as they move, so it . . . καὶ ἔστι τοῦ φιλοσόφου περὶ πάντων δύνασθαι θεωρεῖν." (Stirling's "Review of Buckle" in *North American Review*, July 1872.) "Metaphysics only *follow* physics, and deny them not; only they would philosophize them *still further*—find an *ultima ratio* for them." (Letter in *Courant*, Dec. 21, 1868.)

What is said here of philosophy in general, is specially true in the case of the philosophy of Hegel, whose "principle of the *Notion*," as Stirling says, "demanded realization everywhere."

"In disposition of his Physics and his Mathematics, Newton has involuntarily recourse to a certain metaphysic. Hegel, meddling neither with his Mathematics nor his Physics, *as such*, would simply replace the metaphysic of Newton by his own." [1]

"Not one received physical principle did he [Hegel] deny; his sole object was to replace, not physics by physics, but metaphysics by metaphysics." [2]

"It is only Hegel's exclusive attention to the peculiar metaphysic referred to which misled him occasionally into an appearance of injustice towards Newton, at the same time that, *indirectly*, Hegel cannot *hide* his sense of Newton's transcendent greatness." [3]

Although Hegel was occupied exclusively, not with physics, but with metaphysics, it must be admitted, however, as Stirling quaintly expresses it, that he (Hegel) "sometimes plays his metaphysics too close to physics to come off scatheless"; and this was doubtless the case in his criticism of Newton in reference to the Calculus. Mathematicians of

[1] *Whewell and Hegel*, p. 82. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 103. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

to-day tell us that, at the time when Hegel lived, and long after it, Newton was not thoroughly understood, even by professed mathematicians, and Hegel no doubt simply accepted, from the mathematical experts of his time, the facts regarding Newton on which he founded his criticisms. If, however, so far as the comprehension of Newton's process with respect to the Calculus was concerned, he was not in advance of the professed mathematicians of his day, it is surely something of a triumph for him that the criticisms on which he ventured—not *formally*, but only in passing, and in the interests of his metaphysic—are admitted by modern mathematicians to be just in themselves, and well deserved by certain "slovenly writers on the Calculus," although they are wrong in their application to Newton.

The above is substantially the conclusion on the subject stated briefly by Stirling in a letter to Dr Ingleby, dated October 24, 1871. "It is not necessary," he writes, "that Hegel should be understood as accusing *Newton*—it is enough that he should have certain pretensions of certain mathematicians before him. What Hegel says, in fact, is quite true—though wholly without application."

Hegel was not a professed mathematician. His business was not directly with physics, nor with mathematics. "Even in the physical and mathematical reference," as Stirling said, "Hegel is only metaphysically, or philosophically, employed." If, however, his business was not directly with physics and mathematics, *indirectly*, it was with these, and with every department of human knowledge. The business of the scientist may be said generally to be the discovery, and scientific statement, of the so-called laws of Nature. But those laws are mere generalizations, mere *matters-of-fact* — universal, it may be, but not *necessary*—there is no reason known to science why they *must* be so, and not

otherwise. Take, for instance, the law of gravitation. Science has discovered that every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other in accordance with a law capable of definite arithmetical expression; yet, in the eyes of the metaphysician, the law of gravitation still awaits explanation, for we only know the fact that it *is*, we do not know why it *must be*. On the other hand, these two statements, "Every change must have a cause," "Two things which are each equal to a third thing must be equal to each other," stand in need of no further explanation. We know at once that they *must* be true—that their contrary is unthinkable. They are, in fact, *necessary* principles; and the business of the metaphysician is specially to endeavour to reach such. Of course, there have been so-called philosophers—men of the empirical school, such as Mill and Bain—who have denied the existence of necessary truth; but those men are not among what Stirling calls the "magistral philosophers of all the countries and all the ages—Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant, Hegel"; they are not of those who have held their place through centuries in the Philosophic Succession.

In Stirling's correspondence with Mr Hale-White (author of *Mark Rutherford*, and translator of Spinoza's *Ethic*), which began in 1870 and lasted for many years, there occurs a passage which bears on this subject. Writing to Stirling on 16th November 1874, Mr Hale-White says:—

"As for the Hegelian quest, I get on with exceeding slowness. I could ask you questions for a week. I write questions to myself, what may be called 'struggles to the Struggle.' As a rule, I don't struggle, but lie for days incapable of movement before half-a-dozen words. . . . In the Critique of Pure Reason the existence of *à priori* truths is assumed as beyond dispute. Kant seems to think that nobody will ever question the universality and

necessity of mathematical axioms. I want to know where an answer is given to Mill upon this subject. Mill, as you are aware, points out that the so-called necessary truths are those whose truth is perpetually proved to us, and fairly argues that the repetition of a lesson every instant of our lives must beget almost an impossibility of believing otherwise. I have never seen any formal disproof of this doctrine. I don't say I believe it, but I want to know where he is grappled with and overthrown."

Replying two days later, Stirling says :—

"I point out in the *Kant* in the *Fortnightly*, that to say a thing is *à priori* gives no reason for its *necessity*. This reason lies only in the fact of a *universal*. Space is the universal medium for the facts of sense—every such fact is presented in and through it, and so every such fact must conform to the conditions, to the nature, of Space. These conditions, then, are *universal necessities*. But the relations, or conditions, or nature of Space are not due to anything but its own self. Space is so constituted that its lines and angles, etc., *are* in such and such relations—which all THINGS *must* accept. Why space is so constituted can also be metaphysically assigned. The *truths* of space, then, precede experience, depend not on experience—and so are universal and necessary. Here you see the reason too of the 'repetition,' the 'lesson of every instant of our lives,' you mention as in reference to Mr Mill. *Every* fact of sense must present itself as in space. So it is that these facts are 'of the most frequent occurrence.' Mahaffy, Monk, and the other Dublin metaphysicians who write on Kant, always oppose Mill in these matters, but I cannot say I quite like their points of view, or ways of putting things.

"The argument against Mill is simply this :—no inductive generality will replace a pure universality. The square on the Hypotenuse of the right-angled triangle is equal to the squares of the other two

sides. Measure that again and again, and with every new measurement the inductive generality (and your conviction) increases. Prove it now demonstratively out of the very nature of lines and angles, and you get an *intellectual insight* at once into something that not only *is* but *must* be so and so. Hume himself says, had there never been such a thing as a line or an angle in existence, the truths of Euclid would remain the same. It is an intellectual insight at once, from the very nature of the case, that parallel straight lines *will* never, *can* never, meet. No man ever thinks of *trying* this—whether it is matter of fact or not. As an *experiment*, a *fact of experience*, indeed, it is *impossible*, and yet every man knows of facts of experience that, though they have gone on so and so for many thousand times, they *may* alter at last."

It is in the same letter to Mr Hale-White that Stirling gives the metaphysical explanation of gravitation.

"But suppose your difficulty to be what is the cause of this attraction which is called gravitation?—Well, physicists can only tell you it is a law of all matter, and just *found* so. Metaphysic, for its part, says gravitation is the very nature, the very idea, of *body*. Body is out-of-itself-ness, and out-of-itself-ness must depend on, strive to, its own true self, its *in*-itself-ness—*i.e.*, *to its own centre:* hence the motion or attraction of matter. If you ask again why there is *body*—out-of-itself-ness, externality as such—at all, that, too, Metaphysic can answer, on and on, to the very end—the staple on which the whole hangs—a staple, too, which brings with it its own sufficient reason."

Perhaps it may appear to some readers that all this is a digression from the Newton-Hegel controversy; and it therefore seems necessary to explain that it contains the reply, from the side of metaphysics, to the objection of mathematicians, What

had Hegel to do with the law of gravitation, or the Calculus any way? Perhaps that reply is expressed at its shortest and clearest in the concluding passage of Stirling's *Vindication* of Hegel as against Whewell:—

"Descartes said that he 'should think it little to show how the world *is* constructed, if he could not also show that it *must* of necessity have been so constructed.' This, though censured by Whewell, who cites it, is the true philosophical instinct; and it was very conspicuously the guiding principle of Hegel. It is man's business to explain this spectacle, and he will never cease attempting to do so. But to *explain* is to reduce an *is* to a *must*. To know the former, however, is as absolutely indispensable as to accomplish the latter. This Hegel acknowledged," etc.

The statement contained in this passage of the relative positions of science and philosophy constitutes one of the "reasons" alluded to above for venturing to give here a brief outline of the Hegel-Newton controversy.

Another reason is that, in Stirling's first letter to the *Courant* on the subject (in December 1868) there occurs the following passage, which he himself, in a letter to Dr Ingleby, describes as a "summarizing diamond of my enormous labours on Hegel":—

"Let them [physics] but once ascertain a law—gravitation, say—and what a multitude of facts they at once construe. If Hegel, then, says, I have found a law that construes perfectly, not only all externality, but all internality, there is nothing in the mere statement, however wonderful it may sound, to provoke denial. To *think* is, in so many words, to endeavour to find no less. Now the law of Hegel is not difficult to name: it is this—All that is, be it external, be it internal, is but a function of judgment. In a word, if ultimate explanation is ever to be reached, all variety whatever must collapse into the unity of thought. Nor is this idea original to Hegel; he has simply brought to supreme generalization in it the leading conception of Kant. The misfortune is, indeed, that

neither Hegel nor anybody else has ever stated it so simply. Yet such expression comes directly from the industry of Kant. Hume asked, Whence comes the necessity of causality? Kant answered, There are many such necessities; and they all derive from functions of judgment—categories. Hegel then said, Let me take judgment, once for all, and watch if its own rhythm will not develop into a *system* of functions, of categories—a complete inner. This once understood, the perception that externalization as externalization would follow by very virtue of the same rhythm could not be far. And what is externalization as externalization? What but boundless physical contingency, that can be philosophized only by being reduced, in ascending grades, to the previous law and laws of the functions of judgment. And so on. Such thoughts being held steadily in view, the whole riddle is explained, and even the reading of a dialectic, the principle of which is so plain, ceases any longer to prove hopeless. If it be objected, But genetically to develop all things from a germ of thought is to empty the universe of a God, the answer is easy—No more than of man, whom you will allow to be. The process, moreover, is logical, rather than genetic. In fact, the moment Hegel comes to philosophize time (history), the tables are turned on his objectors, and he can only end in concrete Christianity."

It is to the sentence in this passage, which begins "All that is, be it external, be it internal," etc., that Stirling refers when, writing to Dr Ingleby on Jan. 1, 1869, he says: "That sentence of mine is what I had been searching and longing for for years in regard to that unintelligible procedure of Hegel. To understand this, you too would require to have been years on Hegel. As Hegel has it, there is no mystical idealism—Nature is but the Idea *externalized* —and *externalized* means an infinite out-and-out of individuals in infinite physical contingency. The Idea again is the *internal* system—spun out in the Logic—of which nature is the exemplification. There is no traffic, however, between the individual man and nature as if *he* made it."

Before the first letter on the Hegel-Newton controversy had appeared in the *Courant*, a very

important crisis in Stirling's life had been reached. Early in 1868 he had become a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, and had written to Carlyle, requesting him for a testimonial. Carlyle, who was at the time Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, replied in the following letter :—

"CHELSEA, 23 *Janry.* 1868.

"DEAR SIR,—Before your letter came, I had heard of your candidacy, and have been frequently thinking of it since. So far as I understand, it was expected of you, and considered likely to be successful by the Public.

"I have myself little right to speak on such a subject: quite an alien from all Metaphysic for the last forty years; and ignorant at present what the Electors specially intend their Moral Philosophy Professor to accomplish for them.

"To what I already ventured to say on a similar occasion, I can now add, after reading some of your recent productions and translations, that in regard to German Metaphysics I do find you to have yourself understood every word you put down, and to be completely intelligible to a reader that will take sufficient pains;—which, so far as my experience reaches, is more than can be said of any British man that has gone before you on those topics. . . . Indeed, with all my good-will I can see no *perfectly clear* way of helping you,—except that you should, if you like, print in your Book of Testimonials, what I have here marked the margin of,[1] in the form of *sequel* to the *Glasgow* thing I wrote for you two years ago. If that can be of any avail, that is a fact, and can stand fronting all the winds. For the rest, I have no vote; and truly with the notions I hold should not try very much to influence any other person's. Even for yourself, my dear sir, I

[1] That is, the passage above, beginning, "To what I already ventured to say," and ending "on those topics."

actually *don't know* whether success in this matter, and turning of your talent altogether upon *Metaphysic*, and possibly setting all Scotland on babble with it, would be good for you or bad! I will pray Heaven only, may you get what *is* good! . . .

"May all good befall you.—Yours truly,

"T. CARLYLE."

Replying to this letter a few days later (on Jan. 29), Stirling wrote:—

"I beg to return you my best thanks for your kind letter, and the 'magnificent testimonial,' as my friends call it, which it contains.

"I had a hearty laugh at the idea of *me* converting Scotland into a Babel of Metaphysic. But in truth my wish is to leave unstable theory for the *terra firma* of practice. My books after all are fuller of Ethics than Metaphysics, and so it is that one of them has been made the Moral Philosophy text-book this session. My essays, too, as the *Coleridge*, it was my endeavour to make ethical. It is for this also that I desired so much that you would allow me to send you my *Secret of Hegel*. The Preface and Conclusion of that book *contain to my mind the fruit of the whole;* and that fruit is those ethical, political, and religious principles in which I know you sympathize, and which you wish so much to see extended.

"I implicitly trust your judgment in what you have done or left undone, and assure you of my sincere thankfulness. . . .

"I am haunted with the idea that it lies in your knowledge (knowledge which your position opens to you) and in the opinion formed thereon, that I should withdraw. Otherwise matters look certainly hopeful. The worst they bring against me—if it is against me (and one word certainly is so)—is that I am a 'barbarous imitator' of yourself."

As we have seen, when, two years earlier,

Stirling stood for the Chair in Glasgow University, it was without any great hopes of success, or any great disappointment at his failure. But it was otherwise in 1868. He had now been more than three years before the public, and besides the *Secret of Hegel* he had published his translation and annotations of *Schwegler*, which gave evidence of a wide acquaintance with the entire subject of philosophy. His own view of his claims to the Chair are perhaps best expressed in his letter to John Stuart Mill, from which a sentence has already been quoted. On the suggestion of Carlyle and others, he had been induced to send his books to Mill, with a request for a testimonial. Mill acknowledged receipt of the books with a tribute of respect and admiration for the writer; but declined to give the testimonial requested on the ground that he did not think that the study of Hegel would have a salutary effect on the "immature minds of University students." In his reply to Mill's letter, Stirling writes:—

"Your frankness at least invites frankness, and I will explain the circumstances.

"In 1851, inheriting a very modest sum, I gave up a lucrative professional post to go to the Continent for the completion of those studies which college success seemed to recommend. I was six years on the Continent. From 1856 to 1865 I was most laboriously — rather with positive agony, indeed, and often for 12 hours a day—occupied with those German books that were not understood in England, and yet that, negatively or affirmatively, required to be understood before an advance was possible for us. Since then, I have been similarly occupied with the analysis of Hamilton, the annotated *Schwegler*, certain of the *Essays*, etc. Here, then, is an enormous amount of disinterested sacrifice, disinterested labour, disinterested expenditure of money; and yet at this moment I am some

four hundred pounds actually out of pocket for the publication of these books!

"These are the circumstances, and in their view it certainly appears to me worse still that the attention of him who is at least 'voiced' *the* expert among my countrymen having been invited hither, I should be obliged to learn that, in his opinion, I am precisely the person to be left unrewarded, unsupported. For how can such sacrifices and labours be rewarded, or such studies supported, unless by an academical appointment? . . . The work of a Moral Philosophy class, however, is not logic, but (with a psychological introduction) the institutes of natural jurisprudence, ethics, and politics. In none of my books are those subjects formally or comprehensively treated; still I know not that I have anywhere indicated imperfect studies on, or immature views of, such subjects. The *Hamilton* is psychological, and in its sort, as I believe, the only specimen in the language of analytic objective synthesis. . . . The *Schwegler* ought to show technical knowledge on the required subjects throughout the whole course of the history of philosophy. *Materially*, the greater part of the *Hegel* cannot be brought in evidence; but *formally* surely the whole book may —were it for nothing but the power of work it represents."

Reading this letter, and that of Mill to which it is a reply, one is struck by the advance in philosophical thought which has been made in this country in the last forty years. At the time the letters were written, the school in the ascendant was an empirical, materialistic one, to which the works of Kant, Hegel, and the modern German philosophic writers — those which, according to Stirling, "required to be understood before an advance was possible for us"—were almost wholly unknown. Now, it is probably not too much to say that there is not an occupant of a philosophical

Chair—in Scotland, at least—who is not more or less familiar with the German metaphysicians, or who does not regard their work as what is deepest and most valuable in modern philosophy. For this change the credit is assigned, by those best able to judge, to Stirling, who is admitted to have been "the originator of the idealistic movement, which so powerfully influenced British and American philosophy during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century." That such a man—the exponent of a system, "every step" of which "is towards the Immortality of the soul, every step is towards the freedom of the will, every step is towards God"; the man whose "healthy moral perceptions" Emerson counted among his "high merits"; the man in whom Carlyle perceived "on the moral side" "a sound strength of intellectual discernment, a noble valour and reverence of mind"—that such a man should be regarded as unfit or unworthy to teach students—and that by one of the leaders of an empirical school of thought, which, whatever the personal views of the individual adherent, is bound to induce a sceptical or materialistic attitude of mind on those who belong to it—cannot fail to strike a thoughtful person in these days with surprise and wonder.

Of course, it was not to be expected that those who had the appointment to the Chair should, in every case at least, be capable of judging for themselves of the merits of a writer of such profundity as Stirling (four of the seven electors were representatives of the Edinburgh Town Council, and made no pretence to a knowledge of philosophy, the other three being representatives of the University); but they might at least have given weight to the opinion of such intellectual giants as Carlyle and Emerson. As the day fixed for the appointment drew near, however, it became evident that there were influences at work unfavour-

able to Stirling, and favourable to the candidate who obtained the Chair—the Rev. Henry Calderwood, minister of a United Presbyterian church in Glasgow.

Carlyle, who, as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, had been reluctant to take any public action in the matter of the election, hearing what was going on in Edinburgh, wrote, two days before the appointment was to take place, the following letter to Stirling:—

"Chelsea, 16*th June* 1868.

"Dear Stirling,—You well know how reluctant I have been to interfere at all in the election now close on us, and that, in stating, as bound, what my own clear knowledge of your qualities was, I have strictly held by that, and abstained from more. But the news I now have from Edinburgh is of such a complexion, so dubious and so surprising to me; and I now find I shall privately have so much regret in a certain event—which seems to be reckoned possible, and to depend on one gentleman of the seven—that, to secure my own conscience in the matter, a few plainer words seem needful.

"To what I have said of you already, therefore, I now volunteer to add that I think you not only the one man in Britain capable of bringing metaphysical philosophy, in the ultimate, German or European, and highest actual form of it, distinctly home to the understanding of British men who wish to understand it; but that I notice in you further, on the moral side, a sound strength of intellectual discernment, a noble valour and reverence of mind, which seems to me to mark you out as the man capable of doing us the highest service in ethical science too; that of restoring, or decisively beginning to restore, the doctrine of morals to what I must ever reckon its one true and everlasting basis

(namely, the divine or *supra* sensual one), and thus of victoriously reconciling and rendering identical the latest dictates of modern science with the earliest dawnings of wisdom among the race of men. This is truly my opinion, and how important to me, not for the sake of Edinburgh University alone, but for the whole world for ages to come, I need not say to you.

"I have not the honour of any personal acquaintance with Mr Adam Black,[1] late member for Edinburgh, but for fifty years back have known him, in the distance, and by current and credible report, as a man of solid sense, independence, probity, and public spirit; and if, in your better knowledge of the circumstances, you judge it suitable to read this note to him—to him, or indeed to any other person—you are perfectly at liberty to do so.—Yours sincerely always,

"T. CARLYLE."

The election to the Chair took place on the 18th of June; and on the 19th the above letter was published in both the daily papers which Edinburgh at that time possessed (the *Scotsman* and the *Courant*) beneath the paragraph announcing that the "Rev. Henry Calderwood, LL.D., minister of the United Presbyterian Church, Greyfriars', Glasgow," had been appointed to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh by a majority of one vote. The paragraph in the *Scotsman* concluded with the remark that "the appointment of the Rev. Mr Calderwood to the Chair of Moral Philosophy created strong feelings of surprise and otherwise, when it became known in the city," while the *Courant* denounced the "heinous sin which had been committed against philosophy" by the appointment.

[1] The "one gentleman of the seven" referred to above. He was one of the four representatives of the Town Council.

The announcement was received with a general outcry of indignation, amid which the question, "Who *was* Mr Calderwood?" was frequently heard. It is two-and-forty years since then; and Professor Calderwood has gone to his rest, after having become known to a generation or two of students as an honest and kindly man, and a conscientious teacher, who fulfilled for thirty years the duties of the Chair to which he was raised. At the time of his appointment, however, there were several of the ten candidates better known than he, whose only claim to a Moral Philosophy Chair rested on a little book entitled *The Philosophy of the Infinite*, written fourteen years earlier, when its author was only twenty-four.

On the day following the election, Stirling wrote to Carlyle:—

"I beg to thank you with my whole heart for your exceedingly warm and to me invaluable letter of the 16th. It has made my fall light, and will yet operate to my substantial benefit. In presence of the proudest testimony I could get in this world, I knew my own unworthiness, and felt abashed before it.

"I send copies of *Scotsman* and *Courant*. I fear you will be sorely displeased to see your letter in them. I read it in the first instance to Mr Black, who was deeply shaken, but confessed himself 'committed to another.' I, then, at the urgent request of one's sort of committee of friends, ordered 25 copies to be printed for the Curators and friends. So far as the newspapers are concerned, there was no authority, no request, and no expectation on my part. What is said by everybody to-day is, 'That there was so much excitement on the subject that it was impossible to keep the letter back.' I trust, then, you will kindly pardon any annoyance this matter may have occasioned. I have been obliged in other instances to give in to

this way of printing 25 copies of letters, not formal testimonials, that may tell on an election. I enclose an example of this sort in the shape of a kind letter from Mr Emerson that, by a pleasant coincidence, arrived on the same day as your own one.

"This, dear Mr Carlyle, is not the letter which should be written in acknowledgment of such noble spontaneity of generous friendship, but the experiences of this canvass itself, rather than of its result, have left me in a sort of impotent vacuity, and I hope you will pardon it."

The letter from Emerson referred to as arriving on the same day as Carlyle's—*i.e.*, on June 17th, the eve of the election—is the one from which a quotation has already been made with respect to Stirling's *Schwegler*. Referring to the approaching election, Emerson says:—

"I shall be well content if Edinburgh is to have you, and not Glasgow, and should be better pleased to have added the least assistance to such a result: but I had no means for a new judgment until it was too late for the 1st of June.[1] I cannot doubt the result, if qualification is to decide. It is really you must explore and declare to us the hid foundations of metaphysics and morals, let who will sit in the college chair. And yet I pray you to send me word that the Academic electors have justified themselves to our sense."

On the desk at which these pages are being written, there lies a number of yellow newspaper cuttings, bearing dates in June, and even July, 1868, some of which contain indignant protests against the appointment to the Moral Philosophy Chair in letters addressed to the editor of the paper, while others contain still more indignant exposures of the schemes and intrigues which appear to have entered

[1] The reference is to the fact that Stirling's recently-published volume of *Essays*, a copy of which had been sent to Emerson, did not arrive in America at the time expected.

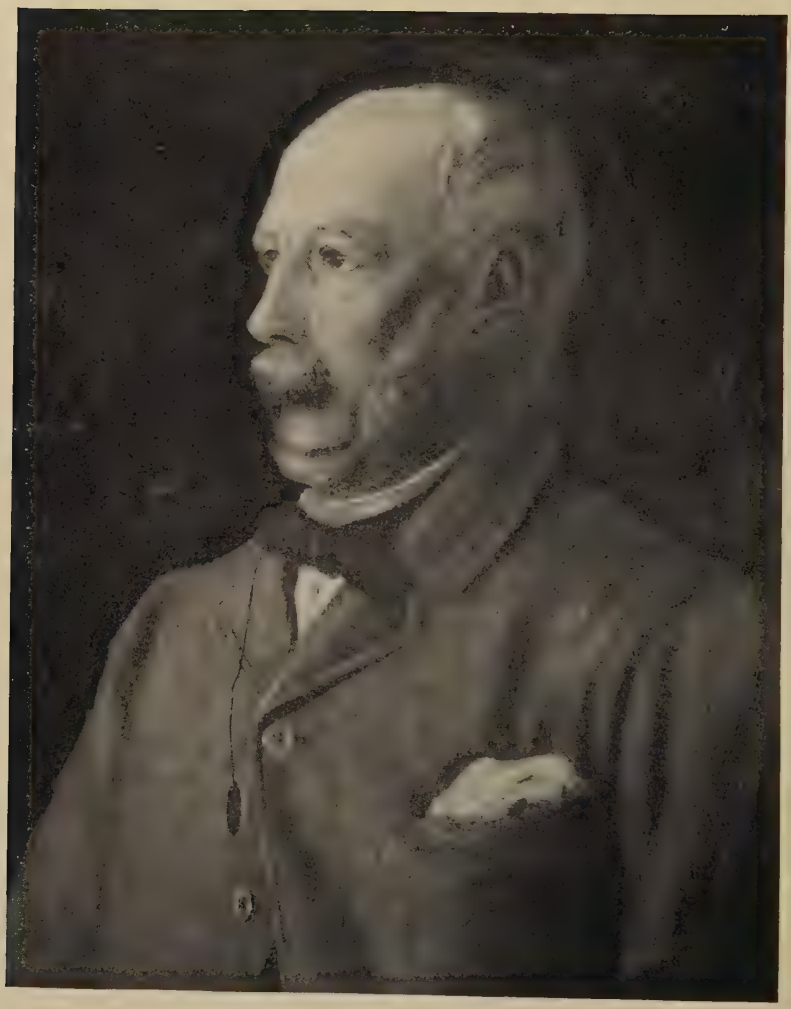
into the case; but it is thought better, at this date, not to re-open old debates. Carlyle's opinion of the matter, however, as expressed in the following characteristic letter, will no doubt be found interesting:—

"CHELSEA, 26*th June* 1868.

"DEAR STIRLING,—Saturday last, about an hour before your letter, etc., arrived, —— had come in (with similar newspaper documents) and shocked me by the astonishing news! Nothing like it, that I remember, has occurred in my time. Fie, fie!—On the whole, since they were at it, I am better pleased they chose Calderwood of the two, and did their feat in so complete a style! Never mind, never mind. Such a *failure* to you is worth ten successes of the Calderwood kind;—possibly, too, nay by this time almost probably, it may turn to *good* for yourself and for all the world.

"By the newspapers (which copiously come to me often in duplicate) I see the immense excitement and emotion of the Edinburgh public on this matter; and by no means wonder at it. But the one thing which I notice of remedial nature is that of having you as supplemental or extraordinary Professor;[1] you and, if needful, others to follow; and keep 'ordinaries' awake at their guns henceforth! This seems to me excellent, as I hope it does to you—and that all effort will at once bend itself in that direction. In *Medicine* it has worked well for the University interests; and I have often heard shrewd people desiderate such a thing for the other Professorships too, whenever applicable to them. Certainly, in this instance, if the question be ever asked in my time there, I know one person who will strongly vote for it! Go ahead, therefore! —Yours always truly, T. CARLYLE."

[1] A proposal to create an extra-mural Chair of Philosophy for Stirling had been discussed in the columns of the *Courant*.



JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING.

(From photo of oil painting by his daughter Florence.)

To face p. 211.

In acknowledging this letter, Stirling remarked: "You have indeed converted my defeat into a triumph, and I am deeply grateful. Such warm expressions of sincere sympathy from you have removed all bitterness, and I can acquiesce patiently in the result."

Nevertheless, the failure of his candidature for the Edinburgh Chair marks another turning-point in Stirling's life. He never again became a candidate for any post. Henceforth, his life was devoted almost wholly to his books and his family. With his small patrimony lessened by losses, and unsupplemented by any salary, whatever his own or Mrs Stirling's inclinations might be, any outlay on social entertainments was well-nigh impossible.

Perhaps, in spite of the charge of caprice so often brought against Dame Fortune, there is after all a certain justice in her ways of dealing. Her awards, it may be, are not bestowed arbitrarily, but in conformity with the great law—You cannot both eat your cake and have it. To those for whom she reserves posthumous fame, the respect and reverence of after ages, she gives in their life-times no honours, or titles, or office, or wealth.

"What porridge had John Keats?"

CHAPTER XIII

1868-1869

Offer from America—Carlyle's Advice—Stirling's Correspondents —The Hegel Monument—*As regards Protoplasm*

Some two months or so after the appointment to the Edinburgh Chair was made, Stirling had an opportunity of seeing how it was regarded by philosophic men in America. Dr Francis Bowen, Professor of Philosophy in Harvard College, wrote to him: "Are you willing to emigrate to the United States, and become my colleague here by accepting a Professorship of Metaphysics in Harvard College?" The letter went on to say that the professorship did not as yet exist, although it was required at Harvard, and that, if Stirling expressed his willingness to accept, the necessary steps would be taken to get it endowed.

This letter Stirling sent to Carlyle, with the following from himself:—

"Dear Mr Carlyle,—I beg to be allowed to send you the enclosed letter for perusal. I thought it my duty to submit this matter to you, but am glad to be supported in this opinion by Professor Masson.

"All my friends agree in acknowledging the great compliment implied in the proposal contained in the letter, but they are all reluctant to speak for (or, indeed, against) the proposal itself.

"Were I just as much over thirty as I am over forty, I should not hesitate about it; but all see that it is expatriation for life, and something of an *enterprise*. This I, who had been abroad long

enough, and had returned *home*, feel also. The money, however, is of some importance, especially with reference to this crippled North British Railway—which, for my interests, nevertheless, will probably be quite restored in a year and a half.

"Some friends opine that, with my German and French, I should try for a consulship, and point to Hannay, who, in such an appointment, has more leisure for literature than ever he had. It is against hopes in that direction that I have never been a party politician. I propose at this election, however, either to decline voting, or to vote for Lord Dalkeith here, and for the Lord Advocate at Glasgow. . . . I am very delicate to intrude, but I hope you will excuse me. It is my duty to show this to all my friends, and especially to you."

Carlyle replied in the following characteristic letter:—

"Chelsea, 12 *Oct.* 1868.

"Dear Stirling,—This voice from New England is a sufficient triumph over the do. from the Edinburgh Bailies, if you needed any triumph over such a thing: but I can well fancy it must be gravely embarrassing to you no less than gratifying. I wish there were in me any counsel that could avail, in return for the trust you show in asking it! I will at least put down what my vague and distant *outside* notions of it are as clearly as I can in this sad whirl of bothers I am in to-day; not to keep you waiting longer.

"Professor Bowen seems a very friendly, honest and candid man; and I doubt not may pass for a sample of the general feeling you would meet with in Harvard, in Boston, and over New England and intellectual America at large. They are an honest, faithful, intelligent, and really friendly people; and would receive you (as I have instances to teach me) with brotherly welcome, not *vocal* only, and be

proud and glad to lend you practical furtherance whenever possible. They much respect talent and proficiency; are a very clear-seeing people, the better kind of them; and would make, I should think, about Harvard especially, a fairly desirable public for a man to lecture to. In fact they seem to me to have many *Scotch* features; Boston not unlike Edinburgh probably—deducting perhaps the huge admiration for *America*, Nigger Emancipation, etc., or *substituting* it for do. of Scotland, and of some equally egregious nonsense of our own! Emerson himself, I have understood, is some kind of head superior (permanent 'Lord Rector,' one of 3, perhaps not altogether titular) over Harvard University, since the last year or two; that is itself a significant fact.—Well, all this, *plus* £450 additional income, *can* be yours if you like; all this, and nothing or little more, I take to be the *credit* side of the account.

"On the other hand, it is evident you would have to expatriate yourself, and become *Yankee*—if at this age you possibly could—Yankee you and yours, or else be more or less of a failure in your new environment! This seems to me a heavy *debit;* and the more I think of it, the heavier. Could you ever get to admire sublime 'stump oratory' as *not* the crying nuisance of our era, but the topmost excellence of it; to accept Ballot-box as the Ark of the Covenant, and roaring 'liberty' (*in fæce Romuli*) as heaven's supreme and finest boon to us? Or would it be an improvement if you could? It is true, we have now pretty well got the 'Devil emancipated' in this country too; and with our late Jamaica Committees, etc., etc.—and here even in Chelsea round me, with the walls and flag-stones (in green paint, or voluntary chalk) all suasive of me to 'Vote for Odger,'—how can I upbraid America with anarchy more dismal or disgraceful than our own! But there is, in this country,

an immense mass of silent *protest* (which, though bewildered, I take to be inexorable) against all that; and a man here can openly consider it, *it* in itself, as vile ruin and fetid mud, which I doubt if he can in America, without penalty exacted. To me expatriation to *America* as it now is (grand as are the *hopes* that perhaps loom through it from the centuries far in the future) would be too like expatriation to a certain *Infinitely* Anarchic Realm, perpetual Chief President of which is called Satanas, who truly seems to me the realized Ideal, and practical consummate flower of what stump oratory, ballot-box, and universal suffrage can do for us in that kind! As to the increase of income to be set against all this, no doubt it is a desirable thing: but I understand you to be already *secure* against *scarcity*, let the gambling of railways fall out as it will, and to be perhaps considerably *out* of thraldom to such lower interests. Pope says once, 'Fire, meat, and clothes, what more? Meat, clothes, and fire!' '*Liberté, vérité, pauvreté*' was D'Alembert's motto: and indeed a literary man that would do anything considerable, in these or in any times, will mostly have to defy Poverty and Mammon both before beginning.

"I seem as if I am advising you, with great clearness and emphasis, to *reject* the American offer: but that is not my meaning at all;—these are merely my own hasty feelings on it, and remote impression from the outside; *your* feelings (which are the determining point) may essentially differ, and indeed in *degree* are likely to differ; but these always are what you have to follow as the guidance for *you*. I can only *advise* (if that were needful) a serious scrutiny and deliberation with your own best judgment; and hope and wish with all my heart that whatever you decide on may prove itself to have been what was best for you. Privately, in my own mind, I sometimes have an IDEAL for you of a very

high kind, achievable in whatever *place* you are, a really invaluable service of the moral kind, which metaphysic, through her acknowledged British chief, might do the distracted, ever-increasing multitudes who appeal to metaphysic as their ultimate divine oracle; and who are not only in supreme danger of 'forgetting God' (if they have not already quite done it), but even of 'learning to steal spoons' (as old Samuel had it)—and of realizing by and by a very devil of a world for themselves and others, poor blockheads!— But of all this I say nothing at present, my very *hand*, you see, is unwilling to write.—Yours sincerely always,

"T. CARLYLE."

Those whom recent publications have disposed to look upon Carlyle as a selfish egoist, must feel that this letter, and the others contained in this and the previous chapter, if they exhibit something of his characteristic intolerance and extravagance of speech, shed a kindly light on the character of the man. All who read the letters must admit that they show a warmth of friendliness, and a readiness, in the midst of his own troubles, to bestow his best thought on the difficulties of another, which do the writer of them infinite credit.

Stirling's reply to the above letter is no longer extant; but that he decided to give the American offer his serious consideration we can gather as well from a letter from Professor Bowen as from the following from Carlyle—the last from him which Stirling received, or at least has preserved :—

"CHELSEA, 16 *Nov.* 1868.

"DEAR STIRLING,—My distinct impression is that your decision in the American matter is the right one; that if those terms are secured to you, it will be your clear course to go. *Philosophic* Scotland, I must say, ought to be ashamed of herself!

But so the fact stands. America has made conquest of you in fair battle.—America, with all her world-anarchies, is without that special one of having dirty puddling Bailies, of the Free kirk or Slave kirk type, set to decide on the highest *Philosophic* interests of their country! Go, therefore, since the Heavens so beckon.—I was not aware the railway jobbers had eaten in upon you to any such extent. That is decidedly too small a sum for keeping house with: £450 per year additional will give right welcome elbow-room,—of which I have no doubt you will profit honestly for your own highest benefit and everybody's.

"I will read the account of *Browning* with the due thanks and attention;—not without one sad reflection that you are so distinctly *ill paid* hitherto for your literary work. Fifty-six pages for £20; Hegel still coming to you in the shape of a *fine*, etc., etc.: it is too bad! And part of it, I do believe, might be remedied,—that of the *rate per page*, and your present revenue from Periodicals, for one thing. Permit me to be clear with you. I do not think writing about literary people, even about Browning and the better class of them, is your special work, very far from it,—and by no means seems your best as a thing for odd hours and by way of PARERGON. 'Literary people' are but a foisonless matter at present: not one in the thousand of them worth a moment's serious thought from a wise man. But beyond doubt there are a great many solid and important things, not specially *Hegelian* at all, which you could write of wisely, and to the interest of serious people, who would hear you far more gladly than on Browning, Longfellow, Hawthorne & Co. I wish you would think of this; and also of trying London for a vehicle to it. The thing has struck myself so much that I mean, the first time I can fall in with Froude (the only Editor known to me, and I believe far the best of them all),

to sound him as to (*e.g.*) a *right* article from you on *Comte* and his *ism*;—popular, yet as *deep* as you like; strong, earnest, yet soft-spoken, etc., etc.: I am convinced you could do it better than any other man; and that it would be welcome to the best men in England, and do some little good. You don't forbid me to try at any rate,—as I will.—Yours sincerely, T. CARLYLE."

As was said above, this is, so far as is known, the last letter written by Carlyle to Stirling, and so concludes the correspondence which had been carried on, at long intervals, for twenty-eight years. It may as well be said here that Carlyle kept his word as regards "sounding" Froude, and that the latter, some five days later, wrote to Stirling that he would be "heartily glad of his help" in *Fraser's Magazine*, of which he was then editor. In the following May, Stirling sent, for insertion in *Fraser*, his lecture entitled *As regards Protoplasm;* but this Froude found too long and too technical for his readers, and the correspondence between the two ended there.

Two years later, in a letter to Ingleby, dated April 7, 1870, Stirling refers to the brief episode of his correspondence with Froude in his characteristically outspoken way: "*Fraser* I shall not write for —Froude made such an ass of himself *à propos* of *Protoplasm*, which he read in MS. exactly as you in print; but I never thought Froude would do for me, and only yielded as it was Carlyle wished it. Froude was too much of the radical and common *aufgeklärter* for me. I knew he, as under Longmans, etc., never could print *my* way of it on Mill & Co., and what I said of these in *Protoplasm* was said just to let me see how Froude would stand the shock. It was as I expected—he was breathless—felt he had a powder-magazine in his house, and returned it at once with a cry of horror, and—*bête* stupidity."

As regards the American professorship, events proved that, after all, the "Heavens" did not "so beckon." Professor Bowen wrote, on Dec. 2 (1868), that "so many changes" had taken place at Harvard that the execution of his project to endow a new professorship in the department of Philosophy must be "indefinitely postponed." This, as we can gather from his letters to Dr Ingleby, was not altogether a disappointment to Stirling, though he had been much touched by the generosity of the offer. "I am sorely troubled," he writes on October 26, 1868, "by an offer just to hand to endow a Chair for me (£450) at Harvard. It is intensely gratifying as an offer—but to expatriate myself for life, when I had been abroad enough, and had come *home!*"

Stirling had no more regular, or more frequent correspondent, during the years from 1868 to 1883, than Dr Ingleby, who has shown the value he placed on the correspondence by carefully preserving Stirling's letters in bound volumes, which form most interesting reading. In the letters, besides personal matters, all sorts of philosophical questions are discussed in the writer's characteristic style.

Another regular correspondent of this period was George Cupples, of whom we shall see more later; and two others with whom he corresponded at less frequent intervals were Edmund Lushington, professor of Greek in Glasgow University, and the German philosophical professor and writer, Ueberweg. For Professor Lushington, Stirling had the highest respect. He was a man possessed of that fineness of nature which sometimes accompanies classical scholarship — chivalrous, yet gentle and modest. The two remained for years (until Lushington's death, in fact) on the most friendly terms, exchanging letters at intervals, and always contriving to meet when Lushington was in Edinburgh. With Ueberweg, Stirling's correspondence was more purely philosophical than with the other three; but

nevertheless Stirling was able to form from it a high opinion of the other's personal character. On his death, which took place in 1871 at the comparatively early age of forty-five, Stirling writes to Dr Ingleby :—

"Poor Ueberweg! One of the best souls that ever lived, and such a worker as was transcendent even in Germany. His professorship seems to have been only £150 per an. For many, many years he had only his mother, and her pension of £30! He dies at forty-five after immense suffering from hip-joint disease. To me personally Ueberweg's is a very severe loss, for we corresponded pretty well regularly."

Early in 1869, the approaching centenary of Hegel's birth (which took place on August 27, 1770) involved his English interpreter in a good deal of correspondence. Dr Maetzner, President of the Philosophical Society of Berlin, of which Stirling had been elected Foreign Member, wrote to him asking his assistance in collecting subscriptions to raise a monument in celebration of the occasion. Stirling undertook to collect in Great Britain; and succeeded in raising about £70—no small achievement when we consider that, only some four or five years before, Hegel had scarcely been known in this country. Among the subscribers were Professor Jowett, Dr Thompson, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, T. H. Green of Oxford, Professors Blackie and Masson of Edinburgh, and Dr John Brown (author of *Rab and his Friends*).

But the chief event of 1869 was the appearance of Stirling's *As regards Protoplasm*, first in the form of a lecture, delivered before the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and afterwards as a pamphlet. Carlyle had declared that Stirling's appointment to the Philosophy Chair was a matter of importance "not for the sake of Edinburgh University alone, but for the whole world for ages to

come." It is doubtful, however, whether much of Stirling's best work might not have been lost to the world had his time been occupied with the daily drudgery of class lectures.

Among his writings subsequent to the *Secret*, none deserves a higher place, in spite of the unimportance of its appearance, than his *As regards Protoplasm*. It is one of the most concise, acute, and irresistible pieces of scientific reasoning ever written. Here, as in *Materialism*, to which allusion has already been made, the advantage of Stirling's medical training becomes apparent. Without that training, the subject to be dealt with would have been so unfamiliar to him that it is doubtful whether he would have attempted to deal with it at all. Even as it was, it is obvious from the paper itself that, before beginning to write, he made a most thorough study of the works of the latest physiologists, both British and German; and from beginning to end of his argument he meets Professor Huxley on his own ground, physiology. *As regards Protoplasm* is, in fact, a refutation, by means of reasonings based on physiological considerations, of Huxley's theory "that there is one kind of matter common to all living beings," named by him Protoplasm; that "all animal and vegetable organisms are essentially alike in form, in power, and in substance"; and (2) that "all vital and intellectual functions are the properties of the molecular disposition and changes of the protoplasm of which the various animals and vegetables consist."

Taking each of these statements separately, Stirling shows, by means of irresistible arguments, and with abundance of illustration and reference to authorities, that the protoplasm of the various organs and organisms differs (1) in chemical substance, (2) in structure, and (3) in power or faculty.

"All the tissues of the organism are called by Mr Huxley protoplasm; but can we predicate identity for

muscle and bone, for example? . . . There is nerve-protoplasm, muscle-protoplasm, brain-protoplasm, bone-protoplasm, and protoplasm of all the other tissues, *no one of which but produces its own kind, and is uninterchangeable with the rest.* Lastly, on this head, we have to point to the overwhelming fact that there is the infinitely different protoplasm of the various infinitely different plants and animals, in each of which its own protoplasm, as in the case of that of the various tissues, but produces its own kind, and is uninterchangeable with that of the rest."

With respect to Huxley's second proposition, that all vital and intellectual functions are but the properties of the molecular changes of protoplasm, Stirling points out, in the first place, that it rests on no better argument than an analogy drawn between water and its chemical constituents, on the one hand, and protoplasm and its chemical constituents on the other. There is no greater difference, Huxley argues, between the properties of protoplasm and those of its chemical constituents, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen, than between the properties of water and those of its chemical constituents, hydrogen and oxygen. With the help of an electric spark, hydrogen and oxygen can be converted into water; with the help of pre-existing protoplasm, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen can be converted into protoplasm.

This analogy, however, Stirling goes on to point out, breaks down at once when applied to *living* protoplasm, though applicable to dead protoplasm. Water exhibits different properties from those of its constituents, but the new properties are only *chemical and physical;* protoplasm — living protoplasm — exhibits new chemical and physical properties, but it exhibits also a new *kind* of property which is neither chemical nor physical.

"Life, then, is no affair of chemical and physical structure, and must find its explanation in something else. . . . Water, in fact, when formed from hydrogen and oxygen, is, in a certain way, and in relation to them, no

new product; it has still, like them, only chemical and physical qualities; it is still, as they are, *inorganic*. So far as *kind* of power is concerned, they are still on the same level. But not so protoplasm, where, with preservation of the chemical and physical likeness, there is the addition of the unlikeness of life, of organization, and of ideas . . . it is *not* mere molecular complication that we have any longer before us, and the qualities of the derivative are essentially and absolutely different from the qualities of the primitive. . . . As the differences of ice and steam from water lay not in the hydrogen and oxygen, but in the heat, so the difference of living from dead protoplasm lies not in the carbon, the hydrogen, the oxygen, and the nitrogen, but in the vital organization."

If chemical combination, or molecular change, is proved to be inadequate to account for the phenomena of life and organization, it must be even more inadequate to account for those of thought. Here Stirling, in passing, introduces, in opposition to the statement that thought is simply a *function* of matter, an argument, which is more fully developed in his address on *Materialism*, from which the following passage is taken :—

"But we are met here by the word *function*. . . . Thought is but a function of the brain, says the materialist; and so fancies that he has solved the problem. . . . Does the word function really remove the mystery? . . . *Can* consciousness be compared with, or set down in the category of, other functions? The function of the lung . . . can be followed throughout, and understood throughout. Though the peculiarity of vitality mingles there, it can still, in a certain aspect, be called a physical function, *and its result is of an identical nature*. If, and so far as, the function is physical, the result is physical. So with the stomach; function and result are there in the same category of being. The liver is so far a physical organ that it can be seen, it can be touched, it can be handled; but is it otherwise with the bile, which is the result of its function? Can it, too, not be seen, and touched, and handled? . . . But look now to the brain, and the so-called product of *its* function. Do we any longer find the same identity of its terms? No, the terms there are

veritable extremes—extremes wider than the poles apart —extremes sundered, as I have said, by the whole diameter of being. The result here, then, is not like the result of any other function. . . . The result here, in fact, is the very antithesis, the very counterpart, of the organ which is supposed to function it. An organ, after all, consists of parts; but thought has no parts, thought is *one*. Matter has one set of qualities, mind another; and those sets are wholly incommensurable, wholly incommunicable. A feeling is not square, a thought is not oval. Hardness, impenetrability, etc., are quite meaningless in reference to any simple constituent of mind, just as *its* properties again are wholly inapplicable to any constituent of matter."

It is impossible to follow out here Stirling's entire argument of the conclusions of which what has been given above is only the barest outline, the steps to which—generally the most interesting part of the reasoning—have perforce been left out. The general conclusion of the argument, however, must be given; and it will be found to prove that, if, as was said above, Stirling throughout bases his reasoning entirely on physiological grounds, he is nevertheless still the metaphysician.

"In the difference, rather than in the identity, it is," he remarks, "that the wonder lies. Here are several thousand pieces of protoplasm; analysis can detect no difference in them. They are to us, let us say, as they are to Mr Huxley, identical in power, in form, and in substance; and yet on all these several thousand little bits of apparently indistinguishable matter an element of difference so pervading and so persistent has been impressed, that, of them all, not one is interchangeable with another! Each seed feeds its own kind. The protoplasm of the gnat will no more grow into the fly than it will grow into an elephant. Protoplasm is protoplasm; yes, but man's protoplasm is man's protoplasm, and the mushroom's the mushroom's. In short, it is quite evident that the word modification, if it would conceal, is powerless to withdraw, the difference; which difference, moreover, is one of kind and not of degree."

From this passage we see that, while throughout

the entire paper, Stirling has been bringing forward only physiological arguments, at the back of his mind there has been all the time the fundamental Hegelian distinction of *Identity* and *Difference*. This he himself afterwards admitted in the preface to the second edition of the pamphlet. He relates there how Professor Ueberweg, the German philosopher, had written to him: "As I am neither a physiologist nor a zoologist, I cannot be expected to follow your argument into its details, but I am vividly interested by its logical or dialectical leading thought—the contention, namely, for the right of the logical category of Difference, as against that of Identity one-sidedly accentuated, as it seems, by Huxley." To which Stirling replied, as he tells us, "that he (Ueberweg) had hit the mark—that I had been simply laughing all through, and holding up to the category of identity the *equally authentic* category of difference—but that it had taken a German to find me out."

The little book, which was published in the autumn after the address had been delivered (1869), was received with enthusiasm by men of science and letters not belonging to the materialistic school. The great Sir John Herschel, who was then an old man, and nearing the end of his life, wrote to a friend of Stirling's: "Anything more complete and final in *the way of refutation* than this Essay, I cannot well imagine"; and this opinion was shared by such men as Dr Lionel Beale (author, himself, of a work on *Protoplasm*), Dr John Brown (author of *Rab and his Friends*), Professor Masson, and Dr Hodge of Princeton.

CHAPTER XIV

1870-1871

Offer of Lectureships in America—Stirling's Reasons for Declining—Reviews in *Courant* (Berkeley, Bain, etc.)—Stirling's Friendships—James Scot Henderson—Articles on Rüge—*Lectures on the Philosophy of Law*—Death of Stirling's Daughter—Letter from George Cupples

It was a natural consequence of Stirling's extraordinary vitality and intellectual energy that, when he was not fully occupied with intellectual work, he was apt to become depressed and low-spirited. Several of his letters of 1870 show him in this mood. The excitement of the contest for the Chair in 1868, and the occupation afforded, in 1869, by the preparation of his lecture on Protoplasm, first for an audience, and afterwards for the Press, were followed by a period of reaction.

"I?" he writes to Ingleby in April 1870—"Only clearing up little engagements — reading books sent me—Ueberweg's, Emerson's, Harris' (of St Louis), Bain's (not sent by Bain), etc., etc. . . . I feel sick, sour—have heart for nothing public—retreat into absolute retirement."

He had abundance of materials in hand still for important philosophical works—as, for instance, on Kant — but his books, so far, had not been a *pecuniary* success, whatever renown they had brought him; and, with a young family growing up round him, and a capital diminished by losses, he could not afford to disregard the pecuniary aspect of the case.

To Mr Hale-White, who had written urging him to bring out the exposition of Kant referred to in the *Secret*, he replied on May 8, 1870: "I am

still some two hundred pounds out of pocket by the works on Hegel and Hamilton, and consequently am not warranted to risk a publication on Kant. . . . Very curiously, too, directly after publication of the book on Hegel, certain investments began to look gloomy, so that till lately (that is, for about five years) I have had to live in such a state of misery and apprehension that the very sight of a volume of the *Secret of Hegel* made me shudder as if it had been my evil genius. I have no greater pleasure in the world than writing on those things, but I think you will see that I cannot at present be much tempted to go on with my Kant."

Early in the year, he had received a gratifying offer from America. The President of Harvard College wrote inviting him to give a series of lectures on philosophy at Harvard. For those lectures, the pecuniary return would not be large, but accompanying the letter of the President of Harvard was another from the Secretary of the Lowell Institute, Boston, inviting Stirling to give a series of twelve popular lectures at the Institute, for which he would receive £312.

"The whole expedition would be over in 3 months," Stirling wrote to Ingleby. "Of course, it is admirable, and would be quite the thing for an old habitué to lecturing with his material in his desk. I wish I could say it tempts me. Mere money will not. I have a great dislike to move. Let me just rotate in my daily routine. For the size of my family, I should just like my income doubled, but were I dead, my keep would be saved, and they would only be better off (I produce nothing, as you know), so that I have properly no anxiety there.—It is really hard to get me to move so decidedly as that—thirty lectures on I know not what—and off to America."

Although he was unwilling to "move so decidedly" as to America, another letter, written later

in the same year and to the same correspondent, proves that he at least contemplated another move, more permanent, if less distant.

"I had a visit on Saturday," he wrote on October 31, "from an old friend whom I knew many years ago in Wales (though he is a Scot)—a Mr Menelaus. He is the one great man now of Dowlais (the largest iron work in the world—the property of Sir —— Guest—which netted sometimes in my time £300,000 per an., and now has trebled, according to Mr M., its average annual product). This visit has given me some new ideas. I am doing no good here—I have spent enormously, laboured enormously, with scarcely any result . . . money gets more and more a good daily—I do not require to live here—why not go back to Wales and—at least—practise as a physician? I suppose it would not be difficult to add M.D. to my other titles. Dowlais has some six surgeons, the chief has £600 per an., and all found him—house, horses, gas, coal, medicines, etc. It is not such a place as that I will take now—I should only go to some Welsh centre within reach of my old friends, as a physician only. I conceive Scotland to have disgraced herself in my case, and, though I had little fancy for an American exile, will be quite willing to shake the dust of my feet in her face—for something in England or Wales. Mr M. thought my ideas feasible, and I have *carte blanche* to go to him—indeed others—to look about me . . . so you see I am all for throwing philosophy and literature, as they only deserve at my hands, to the dogs, and going in for occupation that will pay."

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to say that the step contemplated was never taken; medicine had been abandoned, for good and all, twenty years before; and it would have been hardly possible for Stirling to return to it, even if he had been

really resolved to throw up philosophy, instead of merely writing in a passing mood of depression, as was the case. Almost the only work of Stirling's published during 1870 consisted of a number of short papers—chiefly reviews of books on very different subjects—which appeared in the *Courant* newspaper during that year and the previous one. The most important of the reviews were those on Ueberweg's German translation of Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge*, on Semple's translation of Kant's *Metaphysic of Ethics*, on Beale's *Protoplasm*, on Bain's *Logic*, and perhaps we may add that on Sylvester's *Laws of Verse*.

Of Berkeley's philosophy, Stirling had no high opinion, as can be seen from the following extract from a letter to Dr Ingleby, dated March 7, 1869, in which he is refuting an attempt to find a resemblance between the idealism of Hegel and Berkeley:—

"Berkeley's subjective idealism is almost an incessant object of sincere rejection on the part of Hegel. I can see no resemblance. Hegelianism is hardly at all even idealism. Though thought is substance, yet a real independent *outer* is part of its machinery. There is nothing in Berkeley but —Things are sensations, and must be *where* these are, and *as* these are. Then to the question, Whence the sensations? Berkeley gives for reply the *word* God. That is, as Hegel says, God is Berkeley's Gosse (spout). Berkeley never thinks of the further question—but this Gosse, then, which you only abstractedly name, can you show it me—concretely, and its connexion with me—concretely? Berkeley is a *phrase*—Hegel is a vast *system* of metaphysics, logic, philosophy of nature, mental, moral, political, æsthetical, religious, historical science."

To quote from the *Courant* article:—

"Berkeley's idealism, according to the Germans them-

selves, was but the *dogmatic* idealism; that is, he set up the single proposition that things were mental, and merely explained and defended it. In him there is no *system* of philosophy whatever, whether theoretical or practical. . . . The entire matter of Berkeley's *Principles* and of his Dialogues can be reduced to the simple equation *Perceptum* = *perceptio*. That is, things are perceptions, and as perceptions can only be mental. This to a Hegel is a change but of small consequence. I do not ask you what things are, of what substance they are (he says); to explain these references is to explain neither things nor their system, and it is precisely things and their system that I want to understand. Here is a watch (we may suppose him to say); to explain it is to show me its system, and not to tell me it is silver, or it is gold, it is here or it is there. To tell me I am a spirit, too, and that a greater Spirit *gives* me the things, is again only to *tell*, it is not to explain. Spirit so used is an empty word."

In this extract, we see what was perhaps Stirling's fundamental objection to Berkeleianism—the absence of philosophical explanation and *system*, in place of which there is only *assertion*. In this reference, Stirling contrasts, in the article, the great German philosophers with Berkeley, and points out how, with the Germans, the main interest was *system*—"the system of philosophy in general, and in all its departments—physical, political, moral, religious, and æsthetic, not less than metaphysical and logical." This leads naturally — considering who the writer of the article is—to some discussion of the position of Hegel with respect to the theory of perception in a passage of remarkable lucidity, from which the following brief extract is quoted:—

"We have always thought it a mistake on the part of the adherents of the New Empiricism in Germany to fancy themselves and their movement in opposition to Hegel and his. . . . Hegel never denied the position of Empirical Psychology; and into the results of inquiry *from* that position, he was as curious as another. . . . Nevertheless, it is quite certain that from that position there never can be philosophy. Demonstrate never so clearly every link in the chain of connection between an assumed object and

an assumed subject, and you leave all the same, let the *medium* be understood as it may, the *terms* unexplained: both subject and object are still *assumed*. Now, precisely the removal of this assumption is the business of philosophy. Philosophy must demonstrate the single *necessity*, and its necessarily resultant single system. It is no explanation to exhibit *experience* as the source of our ideas . . . we must still explain experience. As Hegel says, the question at last is, not how came ideas into me, but how came they into the things themselves? The question in fact is—are ideas themselves *true?* How establish the *truth* of existence and its contents?"

The passage which follows, on Hegel's Absolute, ought to be light-giving to students of Hegel:—

"That is what Hegel means by the Absolute, of which it is peculiarly amusing to hear the uninitiated speak as if it might be the roc's egg that was the master of the genii in the *Arabian Nights*. . . . Mr. Micawber, with the intense sympathy of Mr Pecksniff, shakes his head, and thinks 'the constitution of the solar shade precarious'! Hegel, however, when—having remarked that 'Greece was pressing forward towards the idea of a god that had become man, and not as a remote foreign statue, but as an actually present god in the godless world'—he asks, 'was not, moreover, the infinite now shifted into self-consciousness?' is neither emptily prating with parade about the constitution of the solar shade, nor noisily babbling about a roc's egg. He is only saying, by his infinite and his absolute, what we have said a thousand times by the word truth. 'Truth, or the truth of things, was now supposed to lie in self-consciousness.' The absolute and the infinite—that is, the fundamental and abiding truth of things—was to Hegel simply self-consciousness *in a universal sense*. Thought was the one *Anagkē* and alone competent to the entire system of its own constituent particulars; of which system nature was but externalization as externalization. Nor is this Pantheism in any sense in which Christianity is not Pantheism.[1] The system of thought ends with the

[1] The following quotation from a letter to Cupples seems to furnish a reply to those who accuse Hegel of Pantheism: "Etymologically there is no Pantheism but materialism. To Hegel Nature is as much outer as it is to any man, and he never for a moment fancies that God and Nature are not *two*."

Absolute Idea, and that of nature with Life; these, then, are but the constituents of the absolute spirit that sums the whole. He is the living subject of the creative thought, and in Him it is that finite subjects live and move, and have their being. . . . And this is at once Philosophy and Christianity."

This passage seems to contain a reply to those who object, to the God of Hegel, the want of personality. Hegel's fundamental principle is Self-consciousness—not the *subjective* self-consciousness of the Cartesian *Cogito ergo sum*, but the universal self-consciousness—and self-consciousness surely implies personality.

The whole of the article, did space permit, might be quoted with advantage. It is full of thought and suggestion on many points, expressed with all the writer's usual vividness and originality, and with more than his usual clearness. But some of the other *Courant* articles deserve a word or two.

The *Bain* article, as might be expected, is purely *polemical*. Bain was an *aufgeklärter*, an empiricist, and therefore, philosophically, anathema to Stirling. "Bain seems to belong wholly to the Mill and Lewes school," he writes in a letter to George Cupples. "No apodictic exists for him: he asks what you mean by necessity, and has succeeded in persuading himself it does not exist even in Mathematics." This being so, it is only natural that Stirling's review on Bain should be an assault in full armour. We shall give here only the concluding paragraph:—

"But interesting points to discuss with Mr Bain crowd on us. Practically, however, we shall just indicate our dissent from the dictum that 'there can be no end beyond human enjoyment — the gaining of pleasure and the averting of pain.' Respectfully and moderately, but firmly, we must be allowed to deny this. Never since the world began has such been the principle of action to any one civilized community. *Eudæmonism never appears in this world but when the community is in dissolution, and the*

individual must look out for himself. And theoretically, we would point out that there can be no *philosophy* of subjectivity, but only of objectivity. To have so many sensations, and so many laws of association, and then imaginatively to combine them into the formed world as we know it, that is not philosophy. Philosophy is to give us the *reason* of and for the *formed* world itself. It is quite curious to watch Mr Mill and Mr Bain in what they think philosophizing—Mr Mill concealing himself from his own presuppositions behind the shadowy heads of a ghostly asparagus-bunch of possible sensations; and Mr Bain, with a sobriety of aspect that becomes the occasion, intently milking, if we may use the word, his own biceps into Time and Space."

Perhaps it may be permitted, before passing on, to express the hope that the sentence italicized in the above quotation is not prophetic; for, surely, never was the spirit of Eudæmonism more rampant than at present — never was it more generally accepted—at any rate, in practice—as the principle of action!

The Bain review seems to have made some talk on its appearance in the *Courant*. Writing to Ingleby on May 1 (the article had appeared on April 19), Stirling says: "*Courant* hears on all hands of the Bain article — 'crushing,' 'clear,' 'serve 'em right,' 'so-and-so, far and away our best philosophical writer,' etc., etc. Wal! I guess it wur about time. We ain't through the wood yet, though—I have so much to do yet for Kant and Hegel."

The publication of a book on the *Laws of Verse* by the great mathematician, Sylvester, gave to Stirling, in October 1870, the opportunity for a spirited and characteristic review. The following brief passage is the spontaneous expression of the literary man "by the grace of God":—

"We have here ample proof of Mr Sylvester's acquaintance with the most delicate secrets of the art . . . but we feel that, after all, much must be left, so far as execution is

concerned, to the *unconscious* instinct of the poet himself. The secrets of the true poet are even infinite, and, after all that is done for consciousness, he must be left for the most part to himself. Take Milton, for example. Who can ever hope to name, or give a reason for, all that entrances him in the numbers of that divinest of masters? Nay, were all finally named and reasoned, would the charm be as great? Or might not the resultant *rules* but prove as mechanical appliances and destructive of life?"

In this passage we hear the voice of Nature's *littérateur* (as contrasted with the school-made, or University-made species), to whom it is utterly absurd, and even profane, to expect to acquire the divine afflatus by means of any course of teaching—an opinion which appears unhappily to be becoming uncommon in these days.

After 1870, Stirling appears to have written no more articles for the *Courant*, the reason being probably a change in the editorship of the paper. During the years when the series of articles mentioned above appeared in its pages, Stirling had no more intimate friend and associate than its then editor, James Scot Henderson. Henderson, however, gave up the editorship in order to go to London, where for several years he supported his wife and family by that most desperate of all means of procuring a livelihood—writing articles for the various periodicals—and died many years before Stirling, worn out with the daily strain and struggle of his life. He left Edinburgh in the autumn of 1871, and in a letter written in 1872, Stirling writes: "Henderson writes from London. He is *indefatigable*. Has articles almost every day somewhere or other—*Pall Mall*, *Saturday*, *Fortnightly*, *Spectator*, *Globe*, *British Quarterly*."

In his pamphlet on *Cholera*, Stirling had expressed the belief that, for the procurement of even bodily health, certain moral and intellectual, as well as physical, conditions were necessary, and among those he included friendship. The model man

whom he describes in the pamphlet must have a friend, or friends, "and know the clear deliverance of a full communion." When he wrote those words, he was expressing his personal conviction, his personal experience. Throughout his life—in his student days in Glasgow, in Wales, in France—he was never without at least one personal friend; and during the period we have now reached, if his slender means cut him off, more or less, from Society properly so-called, they could not deprive him of the satisfaction of friendship.

During the years of his maturity and old age, three men stood, at different periods, in the closest friendship with him, and of these three, Henderson was the special friend of the last years of the "sixties" and the first of the "seventies." Other friends and acquaintances he had. It was about this period that he met again, after an interval of many years, two friends of his student days—the Rev. Andrew Gunion, and the Rev. James Simpson, both of whom he saw at frequent intervals. Then there was Professor Campbell Fraser, whom he sometimes met; there was Professor Masson, with whom he occasionally enjoyed a smoke and a talk; and there was the Rev. James Mitchell, Parish minister of South Leith, and afterwards Moderator of the Church of Scotland, to whose sympathy and practical wisdom he often resorted for counsel and support in domestic difficulties and anxieties; but of them all, at that time, Henderson undoubtedly stood closest to him—not even, perhaps, excepting George Cupples (one of the three men referred to above), with whom he was then carrying on a frequent correspondence.

In his friendship with Stirling, Henderson—as was perhaps the case with each of Stirling's most intimate friends—was *celui qui baise*. Considering Stirling's commanding intellect, and force of character, this was indeed almost inevitable, though

he returned the affection bestowed on him with warmth. Soft, and flabby, and somewhat sickly of hue, as the desk man is apt to be, slow of movement and slow of speech, with sleepy, half-closed dark eyes, and a sleepy, soft voice, Henderson's attitude to his fervid, vehement, energetic friend was almost that of an admiring wife to an admired husband. Whenever he had a few hours' leisure from his editorial duties, he was eager to spend them in a smoke and a talk with Stirling, he contributing to the talk, as might be expected, immeasurably the smaller share. Sometimes in summer they would take a long walk together, by the sea, or among the Pentland Hills, accompanied by Henderson's big retriever, "Hector," for which its master cherished an almost paternal affection; and once or twice they spent a few days under the same roof in the island of Arran. Perhaps the following extract from a letter of Henderson's will show, better than anything else, the kind of friendship which Stirling was capable of inspiring, and did actually inspire. There had evidently been some little unpleasantness between the friends; the editor had somehow offended Stirling, and he had avenged himself on the friend. Henderson's letter is one of explanation and self-defence, ending with this paragraph:—

"I CANNOT allow myself to contemplate as possible any interruption of our friendship and intercourse. Whatever you do or determine, *that* MUST be put out of the question. Tell me what you wish—impose on me what test you please—do anything, say anything, write anything, rather than contemplate the possibility that I can ever cease to be towards you anything but your affectionate and admiring friend."

In July of 1870, the two friends had taken a little trip together to the Firth of Clyde, which to Stirling remained throughout life the epitome of all

the beauty in the world. It was the year of the Franco-Prussian war, and Stirling writes to his wife: "I am quite undecided about future movements. 'Othello's occupation is gone': there is no use to write philosophy in these war times."

Yet, in that summer it was that, besides the reviews in the *Courant* mentioned above, Stirling had two articles in the *British Controversialist* on Arnold Rüge, of which it is to be regretted that, in consequence of want of space, no summary or analysis can be given here. Besides a vivid characterization of the man Rüge (who, born in the island of Rügen, lived many years in Brighton in England), and of his writings, the articles throw valuable sidelights on Hegel and Kant, on Berkeley and Hume, on Grote and Mill and Bain, and even on Goethe and Kotzebue. Rüge may be said to have attempted, in his person, the conciliation of contraries—he was a Hegelian and an *Aufgeklärter*. He belonged, in fact, to what is called the Hegelian school "of the left"—at least latterly, for, according to Stirling, he began with "the Hegelian centre or right," from which his career was "a retrocession to the extremest radicalism and heterodoxy—that is, to the extremest anti-Hegelianism."

> "Rüge, as we have seen, is anti-Christian in religion, and a radical in politics; and in both respects he acknowledges himself to be anti-Hegelian. Nevertheless, he believes himself, even so, to have been truer to the principle of Hegel than Hegel himself was. In this we think he was wrong. . . . The principle of Hegel—and of this we feel sure—can only lead, politically, to the reconstruction of *organic* or *objective* liberty [in contrast with the individual, or subjective freedom, which is Rüge's desideratum], and religiously, to a distinct, positive, and living Theism" [in contrast with the Pantheism of Rüge].

"Glad you liked Rüge 2," its author writes to Cupples in June 1870. "I thought the Hegel part would please. Evidently, however, for English

readers something like a reproduction of the essential *matter* of Hegel is a necessity, before all my revelations in regard to *form* (and motives) can be appreciated at its true value. Had Ferrier lived, who was generous, an *homme de lettres* by the grace of God, and who had for many years hopelessly turned Hegel's volumes round and round in his hands, what I have done would long ago have had the true word said for it."

The same note which is struck here (in the reference to Ferrier) is heard again in a letter to Ingleby, written some two months later. Stirling had taken his family for a month's holiday to Millport, on the Firth of Clyde, and wrote from there. "I brought no book here but Catullus, Greek Testament, Aristotle's *Poetic* (Ueberweg's text, notes and version) and Hegel's *Rechts Philosophie*. The last has got the most of my reading (for actually I *can* READ Hegel now), and, ah me! what wisdom, and wisdom for the hour that now is, and not the slightest dream of it in England to anyone who has not read something of my own."

The mention here of the Greek Testament recalls the fact that it was an inseparable companion in all Stirling's wanderings. He possessed a small pocket edition, which he carried with him everywhere, and which became yellow, and thumb-marked, and thin at the edges with much use. Mrs Stirling used to tell how, during a brief holiday to somewhere on the Clyde, being kept indoors by three wet days, Stirling read the Greek Testament continuously aloud to her, first in Greek and then in English. She was a truly religious woman; but she owned to being glad when the rain ceased.

On the occasion of the holiday to Millport in 1870, the house in Edinburgh, which had been shut up during the absence of the family, was entered by tramps, who seemed to have made it their head-

quarters for some days at least! Writing to Dr Ingleby, Stirling refers to the fact thus:—

"Yes, once more *domi!* But we found someone had been there before us, and carried off articles which it will take some £15 to replace. We thank Messieurs the tramps for their mercy, but, besides another full suit, they have carried off my black dress trousers and waistcoat (dress *coats* not pawnable—and, after trial, my boots had proved impracticable), and so, being so poor at present, rather than buy new ones, I shall not give or take socially —till the British nation think fit to pay me for my work!!"

It was in the following year (in November 1871) that his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Law* were delivered before the Juridical Society of Edinburgh. These lectures Stirling believed to contain some of his best work. "You would see I have been lecturing to the lawyers," he writes in the December following. "The lectures will be printed in the *Journal of Jurisprudence*, and I think the first lecture will be a *revelation* out and out, while the second will put the Freedom of the Will on a new and permanent basis for ever—I hope."

Twenty-one years later, he had evidently not changed his opinion of the importance of the lectures. Writing in 1892 to an earnest student of philosophy, who was anxious to get light on Hegel, he says: "I write by this post to Messrs Oliver & Boyd to send you a copy of my *Lectures on Law*. The first 15 pages have Hegel in full, but in sum."

This opinion was shared by such men as Professor Jowett of Oxford and Professor Campbell Fraser of Edinburgh, the first of whom wrote, "You have made the general idea of Hegelianism more plain than it was ever made before in English"; while the latter stated, "I do not remember to have encountered in our British literature a more densely-packed mass of thought." "Densely packed" with

thought, the first lecture (the 15 pages alluded to by Stirling) especially is—so much so that the lecturer hardly seems to have allowed his audience a moment to take breath, and one cannot help wondering what "the lawyers" made of the two sentences into which the systems of Kant and Hegel are respectively shut—even with the help of the explanations which follow.

If, as one philosophical admirer of Stirling's said, this lecture is "Hegel in a nut-shell," however, it is a shell which the completely uninitiated reader would find very hard to crack—just because it is so "densely packed" with thought—though even he would find some passages in it clear and light-giving. On the other hand, to the reader who has already made some study of Hegel, and understands the enormous difficulty of the subject, the lecture will indeed prove, as its author said, a "revelation" of what can be accomplished in a few pages by the man who has made his subject absolutely his own—who knows his Hegel, as Stirling claimed to know him, "back and front, inside and out, as well as other men know their A B C." There is nowhere else perhaps in all Stirling's writings where the student of Hegel will find, in such small space, so much help in the comprehension of the Hegelian significance of the terms *Notion*, universal, singular and particular, identity and difference, etc. The lectures are founded chiefly, if not wholly, on Hegel's *Rechts Philosophie*, which Stirling regarded with the deepest admiration, as perhaps the most important of all Hegel's works.

When, some two years after they were delivered, the lectures were published in book form, the London correspondent of the *Scotsman* telegraphed: "Dr Hutchison Stirling's new work was published to-day. . . . Here the renowned Hegelian appears in his might, and the manner in which he lays about

him is indicative of the intellectual giant in the world of metaphysics."

The period we have now reached in Stirling's life was domestically a sad one. It was now that his family began to break up. His eldest son, an intelligent lad, who had taken several prizes at the High School, including a first in Greek, showed, as he advanced in his "teens," a certain restlessness of disposition, and an unwillingness to settle down to a sedentary life; and in compliance with his wishes, an opening was found for him on the farm of a cousin in Buenos Ayres, who was a doctor as well as a sheep farmer.

The first break in the family was followed, two or three years later, by another more complete than the first. Though Stirling was now a man of fifty-one, he had never as yet, except in his professional capacity, stood close to that "one incommunicable gulf—the mighty gulf between life and death," and vainly sought to pierce with his sight its unfathomable dark depths. It can well be understood, therefore, that the death, in 1871, of his second daughter, Elizabeth Margaret—a girl of a bright, but sensitive, artistic temperament, and the promise of great charm—must have left a permanent mark on his life and character.

The event drew from his friend, George Cupples, a letter of condolence, so beautiful in its simple, literary expression, so *real* in its sympathy, so truly human and Christian in its thought and the spirit that breathes in it, that it seems to deserve a place alone, and therefore some portions of it are given here:—

"My dear Stirling,—The heart prompts me to write to you at once, as I hasten to do. I know that all words are foolish in such a case—uncommon as it is in its affliction. It is as of old—the best a friend could do would be to come and sit

silent in acknowledgment of the stroke that brings all thought and feeling to the dust. Be assured at least that sincere friendship moves me towards you, willing to mourn as you do—if it might be. If that is the best. Perhaps it is not so—perhaps it is better to try to be like to the sounds outside, and if possible something like the coming slip of natural sunshine which will afterwards light down into the gloom from God, to begin the slow restoration of acquiescence. . . . No event of such a kind ever came upon me so stunningly in its utter unexpectedness. The thought of it came full on my mind in the night, and woke me into anxious desires on your behalf and your wife's—half hopelessness of words to write to you, and half prayer. The worn-out feeling of it to-day brings up some satisfaction in thinking that grief wore you out—and watching. . . .

"It so happens that among all the clear remembrances I have of bright and sweet girlhood in its early spring-time, there is none clearer, none brighter or sweeter than of her. . . . And so she is to remain henceforth all your own, in as far as this world goes—never to go through the other love, nor the cares, nor the fretting and down-dragging common-place. . . . We know that in the temple of our God many pillars are needed . . . but it seems that there are other materials required in its making—adornments from the most precious of human treasure, blossoms of love to be made amaranth, with their eyes still the same to receive you. Some have no such to lay up there—you could never have found in your heart to do it, but it is done past your power. . . . What household is there that does not need one such messenger to be taken up with the dew of innocence still worn, and the bloom never brushed off the cheek?

"The fleeting years fleet so fast now, that this world, oftener and oftener, seems the shadow, *that*

world the substance. I seem to myself at times to be speeding towards the reality of all this, with the swiftness of the moments. . . . There *is* a secret to be discovered—I do not doubt that we shall discover some of it, though often questioning whether so much will be made known at once, as people seem to fancy. Of one grand certainty we are possessed—the certainty of God—the One who makes Himself manifest through human love to human love in the growing creature of His hand. . . . How soon it seems to be coming that we shall attain to the stage of finding this to be the central reality of our life, in a new sphere, leaving the old behind."

CHAPTER XV

1872-1875

"Kant refuted by Dint of Muscle"—Articles on Buckle—The "Revulsion"—Articles on Strauss—Friends of the Period—Meeting with Emerson—Visit to Wales—Candidature of Emerson for Rectorship of Glasgow University—Letters from Emerson

It was in 1872 that the first of Stirling's works on Kant appeared in the form of an article in the *Fortnightly Review*. It was a review of a book, written in German and published in Germany, though its author (by name Montgomery) was evidently British, which professed to be a refutation of Kant's theory of perception from the side of empiricism. Stirling gave his review the somewhat curious title, "Kant refuted by Dint of Muscle," for the reason that, as he said, "It is certainly by muscle that he [Mr Montgomery] would destroy Kant." The Kantian "perceptions" he explains by muscular actions; our conceptions of time and space by "certain muscular actions successively experienced, and reproduced in memory as a collective unity."

To such views as those, as might be expected, Stirling gives no quarter. But his review is more than a criticism of Mr Montgomery's book. With his usual thoroughness, before beginning his attack on the book in question, he has to show what it deals with, and this involves, not only a brief outline of Kant's theory of perception, but a statement in a word or two of the standpoints of his immediate predecessors in philosophy. "The philosophy of Kant," he says, "like every genuine philosophy, is in strict historical connection with that which im-

mediately precedes it. It is an extension on, and of, the ideas of Leibnitz, Locke and Hume."

In a former chapter of the present book, it was said that it was through the door of *causality* that Kant passed into his system. The meaning of this remark is very plainly shown in the review under discussion. Kant's immediate predecessor, Hume, had maintained that we derived the notion of causality, *Every change must have a cause*, entirely from experience; that it was only through finding certain events (causes and effects) *constantly associated*, that we concluded that they were *necessarily connected*. Custom alone was the explanation of the *necessity* we seem to find in the principle.

"Kant saw that the human mind felt the proposition, *Every change must have a cause*, to be *necessarily* and *universally* true, and that to that necessity and universality *no association of custom could amount*. Whatever we know from having experienced it, we know *is*, but not that it *must be*. If there be a *must*, then, in any matter of knowledge, that *must* is in excess of the *is*—is in excess of experience. But there is a *must* in the proposition of causality—every change *must* have a cause—and it must have a source elsewhere than in experience. . . . There is undoubtedly, then, says Kant, an *à priori* [*i.e.*, something previous to, or independent of, experience] in human knowledge, and my business is to discover its source, its limits, and its general nature . . . where can this *à priori* lie? Plainly not in what we owe to sense as it is *materially* affected. All that is materially known by the five senses—colours, sounds, odours, savours, etc.—is only *à posteriori* known . . . we know that it *is*, but not that it *must be*. The *à priori* element, therefore, cannot be due to the *matter* of the senses, but only to something in their own native form or function, or in that of the cognitive faculties. Let us inquire, then, into the *function* of *all* our cognitive faculties in search of this *à priori* element."

This passage gives us a very simple and brief explanation of Kant's general aim. The review goes on to follow Kant in his analysis of the

cognitive faculties, with wonderful fullness and minuteness, considering the space, and there are even two or three pages devoted to the subject of Hegel's relation to Kant, which are exceedingly clear and light-giving, before the direct attack on Mr Montgomery, for which what precedes is, more or less, a necessary preparation, actually begins. That attack we cannot give here; there is space only for the final paragraph of the article. Speaking of Mr Montgomery's "ecstatic adoration of the empiricists, and equally ecstatic denunciations of the philosophers," the reviewer concludes thus :—

"He [Mr Montgomery] will see better yet, however; he will get enough of this, and turn from it. He will see what reaction to this Kant was, and what necessity for this reaction there both was and is. He will come to know that physiology cannot do precisely what is wanted, and that his present recourse to what he calls "the veritable act of living nature," is a recourse also to an *unrationalized nature*, which is the negation of philosophy, the negation of thought. He will come to see that he must abandon the cognitive faculty in the subject, and apply himself to the cognitive function on the object, which no physiology can explain. Lastly, he will come to see that we are sense *and* thought, and that he destroys the very possibility of the latter in making the former all; that philosophers, as philosophers . . . are the friends of science, the friends of law, the friends of intellectual activity everywhere, and that it is really the sensationalists he admires who, shut up in the mysticism of an unexplained and unintelligible chaos of sense, throw all into the unknown, and dwell in a dogmatism, an obscurantism, and an intolerance peculiar to themselves, and painful for others to witness."

Two or three months before the appearance of the *Kant* article in the *Fortnightly*, there was published (in July 1872) in the *North American Review* the first of Stirling's articles on Buckle, which he himself regarded as amongst his best work.

On his own copy of the review, Stirling has written, by way of motto, these words from Hegel, "*Der Dünkel der Unreife*," which practically con-

stitute a summary of his opinion of the writer whom he is reviewing. Buckle, in fact, belonged to the Aufklärung, and not to the earlier period of the movement, when it had its justification, but to what Stirling called the *Revulsion*—the period of reaction to the *negative*, which followed the time of the ascendency of Scott and Wordsworth and Carlyle, when "the previous Humian *negative* was rebuked, and there was an *affirmative* fostered, if only of the imagination."

In Stirling's letters to Ingleby there occur frequent references to the *Revulsion*, and the "men of the Revulsion," some of which it is thought will be found interesting here, both for the light which they throw on the subject, and the characteristic way in which they are expressed.

"Revulsion," he writes in April 1870, "is my own word, and what I mean by it is precisely explained towards the end of the Preface of the *S. of H.* . . . The Aufklärung, beginning with religion, threw off the filling-out of our carcases, and left us in the somewhat conceitedly jejune condition in which Wordsworth and Coleridge found us. Then, there was the reaction which, *in consequence of the support of philosophy not being supplied to it*, has been, in this country, followed by the Revulsion—Aufklärung further thin-ified and conceit-ified into *Aufklärerei*—see *passim* those four shallow, stiff, thin, conceited prigs — weak-heads, or soft-heads, or empty-heads, or wrong-heads respectively—Mill, Bain, Buckle, Grote. . . . The Aufklärung has simply reduced all to abstract *understanding*, philosophy would restore concrete *reason*."

In a letter written in August of the same year there occurs this passage bearing on the subject: "The question here is of a practical doctrine which I view as the most baneful, at the same time that it is the most shallow possible. What am I to do?

I cannot speak softly of what I believe to be wicked — I must then submit to be mistaken by the ignoscant critic who sees in Stirling only an envious younger rival of the older and greater Mill."

The following passage, from a letter dated Oct. 20, 1871, is perhaps peculiarly characteristic :—

"Your friend T—— ought to be rather gentle, sitting as he just does under that heavy mare's nest of his own construction anent Hegel : *I will make him feel its weight some day.* He is certainly a very *well-informed* man, seeing that he thinks Darwin's deduction of a moral sense original! Did he ever hear of one David Hume? It was a man born 400 years ago, too, who tells us that 'in a word, man is not a beast, but he is certainly all beasts,' and that is the only truth, let the extraordinary *thoughtless* illuminati now in Great Britain say what they may. Yes, the roar is awful, but the louder it is, the sooner it will sink. It is but the reaction of the *understanding*, long kept down by the poetical and Carlyle-Emerson tendencies. *Then* a good many sincere people chafed at seeing men mount the pulpit to *say those lies*, and being unable to *speak* their disgust. They have now got power of speech—and everything that was inclined rushes thither—that is all. . . . The difficulty at present is that the mass around the arena think Darwin & Co. the *advance*. . . . The mistake is natural, but it *is* a mistake, and very unfortunate."

As being one of the "men of the Revulsion," Buckle could expect only short shrift when his reviewer was Stirling, who found in him, indeed, all the faults of his school—shallowness, verbosity and pomposity.

The review in the *North American Review* was followed, some three years later, by another in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, entitled *Mr Buckle and the Aufklärung*, which treats the subject at greater length than the first, and with a

fullness of reference to everything and everyone even remotely connected with it, which makes the article a most important and valuable one. It contains, too — as, indeed, they both do — many passages full of thought and suggestion on various points, expressed always with the vividness and vigour characteristic of the reviewer, of which only the following can be quoted here :—

"Aufklärung means *enlightenment;* and *the* Aufklärung is that reaction on the part of general intelligence against political privilege and ecclesiastical dictation which has constituted the history of Europe since Spinoza, Descartes, Bacon, or even Luther. The Aufklärung means at bottom, therefore, only that which is legitimate. No man would wish to see perpetuated the social wrongs, or the religious tyranny, of the Middle Ages; on the contrary, the historical movement that did victorious battle here must be pronounced *the* movement the most important to humanity that humanity as yet knows. It was a necessity—a necessity for the hearts and souls of men; and we now, who think and act and speak in this full freedom, ought to feel that there is imposed on us a most real burthen of the deepest gratitude to those who lived in suffering, and in suffering laboured, for what they knew full well would bring no reward to them. All honour to the Aufklärung!"

That is the right side of the Aufklärung. The reviewer reverses the medal, and shows us the wrong side :—

"Religion and State constitute humanity; and he who rejects the principles of both has ceased to be substantial and a concrete, and has become instead superficial and an abstract—a superficial, vain, opinionated, isolated *sely.* Opposition to *a* religion and *a* state passes but too easily into opposition to those interests generally as such. And as for the workmen, again, it is men of the understanding merely, men of quick parts and clear intelligence, but generally light heads, shallow as to practical human sagacity, and void of any depth of feeling, that we are called on to honour as such . . . universally they are our only speakers at present — and not without an

audience. What we live in now, that is, is the result we hint at—*Aufklärung* degenerated into *Aufklärerei;* for Aufklärerei is to Aufklärung what abuse is to use, followers to leaders, criticasters to critics, poetasters to poets."

Probably there is no passage in all Stirling's writings in which the true position and character of the Aufklärung is described at the same time so shortly and so fully, though, whether in his published works, or his private letters, there was no subject to which he was so apt to be attracted, for the reason that it was to a crusade against the degenerate form of the Aufklärung that, so far as *substance* is concerned, his philosophical life was devoted. Indeed, as will be seen from the following extract from a letter to one with whom, during the later years of his life, he carried on a frequent correspondence (the Rev. John Snaith of Nottingham), it was partly to their opposition to the Aufklärung that he attributed the lack of popularity of the works both of Hegel and himself.

"I quite agree with you," he writes, "as to the colossal size of Hegel; and I agree with you too as to the Christian character of what he writes. It is in fact—to my belief—that reputed character that, in these days, largely prevents the study of him. With our Tyndalls and Huxleys, our Grotes, Buckles, Mills, Bains, nothing will go down with many but the old Aufklärung still. They have been so put against the Christian Scriptures by the Voltaires, Humes, Gibbons, etc., that they cannot believe a philosopher in earnest who will stand by the Bible. They ought to know, however, that the Aufklärung itself has been followed by its correction, and that it is now wholly out of date."

Two short articles on Strauss in the *Athenæum* for June 21 and 28, 1873, gave another opportunity for an attack on the Aufklärung and the shallow scepticism which is characteristic of it. Speaking

of the Biblical critics in Germany, whose work he regarded as one aspect of the later development of the Aufklärung, he says:—

"Hegel, from the very beginning . . . mocked the general industry with the most unaffected scorn, and insisted upon this alone—that with the investigation of *externalities* [*i.e.* such things as dates, historical events, etc.] as externalities, we had nothing whatever to do; that our whole business was to apprehend all doctrine, and make it ours through the testimony of the spirit. Accordingly, for some time back, this has been the attitude of the more earnest minds, whether in Germany or England. They regard all that wreckage of criticism . . . but as so much *lauten Lärm des Tages*, as so much idle play of the contingent."

In the second of the articles Stirling points out that the so-called "advanced thinkers," such as Strauss, and other adherents of the Aufklärung, are really behind the times. "In regard to religion," he tells us, "Dr Strauss would have done all he has done, and a little more besides, had he but referred us to David Hume, and his 'Natural History of Religion.'"

In reply to the statement by Strauss that "it must have been an ill-advised God who could fall upon no better amusement than the transforming of himself into such a hungry world as this," there occurs the following vehement, and very human passage:—

"That is but the voice of an imbecile vanity, foiled in its own impotence. We shall not speak of love, or of one's daily meals, or of science, or of Shakespeare and the musical glasses; but he who has seen the sea, and the blue of heaven, and the moon with the stars, who has clomb a mountain, who has heard a bird in the woods, who has spoken and been spoken to, who has seen a sock or a shoe of his own child, who has known a mother—he will bow the knee, and thank his God, and call it good, even though his lot in the end be nothingness. But 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast!'"

Some years later (in 1881) he wrote to Mr Hale-White—in reply, evidently, to some question on the part of the latter as to his religious position: "Let me recommend to you very specially the Note on the *Sophists* [in the *Schwegler*], and articles on Strauss and Buckle. *That* really is the best thing I have to teach. I hold my religious position to be essentially the same as what is called the Hegelian Right. . . . Hegel's son Karl is at this moment the leader of the Evangelical party in Germany. . . . What we see now, under the Mills, Buckles, Huxleys, *al.* is the continuation of the French Aufklärung in a very shallow form, and those men are supported now by the mass of the reading public, who act as if they had just opened their eyes to the monstrous absurdities and lies they had all this time been blindly believing in trust of the Church. So much is this the case that a man in my position, as supposed to stand for old benightedness, will not even be listened to at present."

In the year before the appearance of the Strauss articles (in 1872), the publication of a second edition of his *As regards Protoplasm* had given Stirling an opportunity, in a Preface, for replying to what Huxley had said in an article in the *Contemporary Review* for December 1871. It was also the occasion of the receipt, by the author, of a large number of letters from men of differing professions, habits of mind, and character—lawyers, clergymen, men of science, scholars, and *littérateurs*—each expressing enthusiastic admiration of the force of reasoning exhibited in the little book. "I cannot imagine anything more thoroughly conclusive than your essay," one correspondent writes. "It is not a chain of arguments, but a chain mail of proof." Roden Noel said of it: "That is one of the most masterly things I ever read; I never could have supposed an antagonist could have been so *very* much smashed!"

When speaking of Stirling's correspondents of this period, mention ought to have been made of Roden Noel — one of the most voluminous and (alas!) illegible of his correspondents during the "seventies," and perhaps the "eighties." Besides corresponding pretty frequently, the two met on several occasions — in Edinburgh, where Noel lunched with Stirling; at the house of Henry Bellyse Baildon, another minor poet; and at Winton Castle, where the two spent a few days together as the guests of the dowager Lady Ruthven—and the literary tastes and enthusiasms which they shared made their meetings and talks always a pleasure to both. After they became somewhat intimate, Noel admitted to Stirling: "To say the truth, from the *Secret of Hegel* and Essays, I thought you must be a *very terrible* person indeed! You do so 'walk into' Hamilton and Coleridge." In a letter dated July 1875, he pays the following valuable tribute to Stirling. "I shall always look up to you," he writes, "as to a master with whom I cannot quite agree, yet who has greatly—very greatly—helped me in thought. No one has fertilized me more—so far as I *am* fertilized!"

Others of whom Stirling saw a good deal, or from whom he heard pretty frequently in those years, were the Baildon mentioned above—a writer possessed of a genuine literary vein, whose tragic end, some twenty years later, his friends in the "seventies" were very far from foreseeing—and his intimate friend, William Renton, a man of intellectual versatility, and varied gifts and attainments —an excellent mathematician, and the writer of a volume of verses, named *Oils and Water-colours*, many of which are marked by originality, and most of them by gracefulness. These two men, being much younger than Stirling, were in the position, more or less, of disciples, as were also—probably about the same time, or a year or two later—Robert

Adamson, a keen student of philosophy, who afterwards became Professor of Logic in Glasgow University, and R. B. Haldane, who has since risen to a high place in the Government of his country, and who alone of the group now survives.

It was in 1872, on the death of Dr Maurice, that an attempt was made by friends of Stirling's and others at Cambridge, to induce him to stand as a candidate for the Knightsbridge Professorship of Moral Philosophy which Maurice had occupied; but this Stirling declined to do. Writing to his friend Cupples on the subject, he said :—

"I heard lately the *Athenæum* said I was a candidate for Maurice's chair. That is quite vexing, for it is almost *worse* than false—false, that is, and a little more. I never dreamed of applying—never dreamed of it at all—Scotland was Scotland, Cambridge was Cambridge. I was surprised — very much, however, a considerable time after M.'s death, by a letter containing others from influential Cambridge men, urging me to stand, inviting me to come up, see the ground, and live among the Fellows as long as I liked. I took 24 hours to think, and then respectfully, but decidedly, declined; and, again, within two days of the election, when Edward Caird wrote me that he had been written to from Cambridge to urge me to reconsider."

In the beginning of the following year (Jan. 1873) a review by Stirling of Professor Campbell Fraser's complete edition of Berkeley's works, appeared in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, a periodical devoted specially to the discussion of the deeper questions of philosophy, and edited by the W. T. Harris referred to in Emerson's letter to Stirling of 1868. Perhaps, in speaking of Stirling's article on Berkeley in the *Courant*, enough has already been said of his views of Berkeley's philosophy; and nothing further need be added on the subject here. The following brief extract from the

American article, however, is given simply as a proof of his high appreciation of the work of Berkeley's editor :—

"Be that as it may, the diligence, the love, the faith of Professor Fraser as an editor are, to our belief, quite unsurpassed in philosophical literature. Had we but—to say nothing of the rest—a Hume, a Kant, and a Hegel in such perfection of detail as a like untiringness of labour and research might extend them to us! For into this labour an earnest endeavour at explanation enters as no inconsiderable constituent. . . . Professor Fraser has not only laboriously pieced together all that belongs whether to the philosophical thought of Hamilton or of Berkeley, but he has read widely in philosophy generally, and is at this moment as much Philosophy's votary as any man that may be named."

The great event of the "seventies" for Stirling was, perhaps, his meeting with Emerson, which took place on the 8th of May of the same year (1873). Professor Campbell Fraser, while in London during the previous month, had had the good fortune to meet the great American, who, though then close on seventy (he passed his seventieth birthday on the voyage home), had come across the ocean with his daughter on a second visit to Britain. Learning that Emerson intended paying a hurried visit to Edinburgh, Professor Fraser invited him and Miss Emerson to dine at his house to meet Stirling and Mrs Stirling, and others. The following brief account of the meeting occurs in a letter to George Cupples, written a few days later (on May 11th) :—

"Emerson came to Edinburgh on Thursday—he wanted to show his daughter Edinburgh and Melrose (Abbotsford), he said; but he let it out pretty well that he wanted a glimpse of my unworthy self! He had met Fraser in London, and expressed to him how glad he would be to have an opportunity of meeting me. Accordingly, on

Thursday last, three hours after his arrival from the south (7 p.m.), we dined with Emerson at Prof. Fraser's. There were present only Fraser, with wife and son, Emerson with daughter, Sir A. Grant with Lady Grant and Mrs Ferrier, Russel (*Scotsman*) with wife, and self with wife.

"When the ladies retired, I was put into the chair beside Emerson, and we had a good jaw [!]. In the drawing-room, Emerson had to receive all the élite of Edinburgh . . . and I saw no more of him till on going away. Shaking hands with him then (wife and I), and asking him when we should see him again, he began to excuse himself (he 'was going away so soon,' etc., etc.), as to strangers, when I whispered our name, and he seized with effusion a hand of each, 'See you again? Of course,' etc., etc.! We had to go up to his inn next day shortly after ten. My wife and Miss Emerson went a-shopping,[1] and E. and I had three hours of it! In the evening I met him again at 'Fichte' Smith's, but I saw little of him there. . . . E. was really sorry that he could not come to 'see where my ink bottle was' on the Saturday, but he had to get to Carlisle that night, stopping at Melrose by the way."

That is all we are told of the meeting. Much as one would like to have a detailed account of "the good jaw" on the Thursday night, or a full description of the "three hours of it" on Friday morning, it is just there that we are left in the dark; and there is nothing to throw light on either—so far, at least, as is known to the present writer—either in writing, or in the memory of anyone surviving. Stirling always spoke with warmth of the mild sweetness of Emerson's look, and the mature, calm wisdom of his talk.

[1] One recollection of that "shopping" which still survives, is curiously illustrative of the difference of the common words in domestic use in America and England. Miss Emerson expressed a wish to be taken to a china shop to buy some "*bowls* and *cans* for the guest-chamber"—Anglicé, basins and ewers for the spare bedroom.

The letter to Cupples ends thus :—

"This is the thing, though—I spoke of your article on him [Emerson]—he had never seen it—I begged permission to send it him—he would read it with pleasure—I rummaged everywhere, and find some borrower has not returned my copy—I was obliged to write and apologize, adding from memory your last words . . . Now, how can we get a copy to send after him to Concord?"

The article on Emerson referred to in the above extract had appeared, like some of Stirling's earliest writings, in Douglas Jerrold's *Shilling Magazine* so far back as April 1848, and had won the warmest admiration of the philosopher, who always spoke of it with enthusiasm as the best thing ever written on Emerson. In the brief biographical sketch of Cupples, written by Stirling in 1894, there occurs the following passage with regard to the article :—

"It is really, however, the little essay on Emerson that has always the most fascinated me: among friends I have never done calling attention to it. I have to say, too, that I never got anyone to read it who did not come to me with admiration in his eyes, and the involuntary exclamation on his lips, 'Ah, yes, Cupples is a great genius!' It is doubtless the best essay ever written in this connection. . . . Still it is not that there is anything specially very wonderful in it as said of Emerson. It is not even the admirably good, true, the perfectly temperate, but perfectly undisguised, as in fact perfectly inspired, state of mind religiously—it is not that in it, no, nor much excellence else, that arrests attention and that haunts. It is a peculiar breadth of flavour, somehow, that is spread over it throughout—a new *race*—a smack, a gust, a savour, that has never come upon one's spiritual palate before."

In a letter to Dr Ingleby, dated May 17, this further word is added with regard to the Emerson meeting :—

"He [Emerson] seems bent on my coming to America, complained of me 'turning a deaf ear' to Eliot (P. of Harvard), and said it was understood

that Bowen was to retire for me, and that they had been all much surprised. It was hardly quite so, however."

In the August following the meeting with Emerson, Stirling, accompanied by his second son, then a lad in his "teens," paid a short visit to the scenes of his early manhood in South Wales. As Stirling never travelled by land if he could possibly go by sea, they sailed to Liverpool, encountering some rough weather on the short voyage, which completely prostrated the son, but left the father well and vigorous. "At half-past six [a.m.]," he writes to Mrs Stirling, "I was thrown out [of his berth] on to the floor, with a hard blow on the breast that bothers me yet. So I dressed, and found we were in a thorough storm with rain. David horribly bad—the picture of death. . . . At ½ past 7, out of 52 only 20 showed for breakfast, where I had 2 cups of coffee, fish, ham and egg, and 3 bits of bread and butter. . . . Poor David all this time in agony."

In Wales, Stirling and his son were the guests of his old friend, Mr Menelaus, manager of the Dowlais iron works, through whom he was re-introduced to several of his old friends of twenty years before. His old "chief" of "Red Rover" memory, Frank Crawshay, was dead; but he dined at Cyfarthfa Castle with Frank's younger brother, Robert Crawshay, now the Iron King, and said to possess eight millions. At Cyfarthfa it was interesting to Stirling to find that Emerson and his daughter had been there shortly before him.

Although it was a pleasure to renew his acquaintance with old scenes and old faces, nevertheless Stirling writes to his wife: "Believe that we both ever regretfully think of you, and wish to be home."

In one of Stirling's letters to Dr Ingleby, there occurs a passage about an illness of the David mentioned above, which is so characteristic of the

philosopher in his domestic and medical aspect, that it is given here. David, then a lad of sixteen, and to all appearance in good health, complained of weakness and want of breath.

"By and by, he complained of being puffed on walking up a hill (though he said he was able to run capitally after his fit, when it blew off), and asked me to tap his chest. I pooh-poohed—tapped carelessly through coat and all—and applied ear to same coat carelessly. I heard a difference, even so, in the respiratory murmur of the two sides. But, good heavens! was the lung-horror to never cease?[1] It was either something or nothing; if something, nothing could be done; if nothing, nothing need be done. A fellow without cough, fever or pain, who ate heartily, and slept soundly all night on *either* side, could not be very bad. The complaint of puffing continued, however, and at last one night, having slipped my stethoscope into my pocket, and descended [from his study] at my usual hour, I took my station on the rug, flung up my arms, then drubbed my own chest, causing him (D.) to look up from a game of chess, and remark, 'It was all very well—if he had my chest,' etc. 'Confound your chest!' quoth I. 'Let me see your chest then.' I found effusion into the right pleura—he had had (almost without symptoms) a sub-acute pleurisy! Two of our best men here—Dr Warburton Begbie, certainly the best here, or, as I am apt to believe, for the stethoscope, anywhere else—endorsed my views of the disease and its rationale. They also agreed to the plan of treatment I proposed. He has now been a week in bed, and has made as much progress as could have been desired. Here endeth ye tale of David."

But though the patient was entirely restored to health, and the lung did not again give cause for anxiety, Stirling's troubles with respect to his son

[1] Stirling's daughter had died of an affection of the lungs.

were not yet over. Possessed of intelligence and good abilities, the lad showed a dislike for regular, steady work; and two or three years after the illness mentioned above, it was thought best that he should go abroad. An opening was found for him on a sheep-farm in Queensland belonging to a relative of Stirling's college friend, the Rev. James Simpson, who was at that time a frequent visitor at Stirling's house. To Stirling, the failure of the hopes he had set upon this son was one of the bitterest disappointments of his life, and helped greatly to deepen the gloom which seems to hang about the "seventies."

Even in the "seventies," however, things were far from being wholly gloomy. To a letter to Mr Hale-White, dated October 28, 1874, there is this somewhat characteristic postscript: "It is just possible that I have no right to grumble: the 5th edition (since 1868) of the *Schwegler* is out, or almost out, and each edition consists of a thousand copies. Then the Blackwoods got rid of 750 *Protoplasms* in a few months. *Hegel, Essays, Protoplasm* (2nd edn.) have all sold upwards of 500. The Lectures are not long out, but will have done their 250 or more. The *Hamilton*, being only a part, has done worst—some 150 remain out of 500. . . . Still *no* literary money received has yet made up my literary outlay."

When we consider that it was only nine years since the publication of the first of the books mentioned, the postscript seems to contain the record, not only of great activity on the part of the writer, but also, when the nature of his works is taken into account, of a reputation of pretty rapid growth. It is surely not often that five thousand copies of a technical philosophical work have been sold in little more than five years.

One of the bright spots in the "seventies" was, as we have seen, Stirling's meeting with Emerson,

and another was Emerson's candidature for the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University, into which Stirling, as Hon. President of the club of students who nominated Emerson, threw himself warmly. His own account of the affair is contained in a letter to Cupples, dated March 23, 1874:—

"Some time ago I had to receive a deputation of Glasgow students who, having started an Independent Club to elect Rectors on general, rather than political, grounds, wished me to be their honorary Secretary.[1] As they said I should have nothing to do, I consented at last. Then they came back to consult me about their candidate for next year: I proposed Emerson. They saw him to be the very best for their principles, and were enthusiastic. Well, the result is that Emerson, a day or two ago, telegraphed to me 'yes.' Now they want me to write them a short article on Emerson."

The article was written, and appeared in the little paper, which the club issued as the organ of their principles, and in support of their candidate. In a sentence the writer upholds the principles of the Independents; then, at greater length, defends Emerson from the charge of "heterodoxy"; and finally contrasts the two great writers of the time, Carlyle and Emerson. The following passage is quoted from the article:—

"Now the objection [of heterodoxy] is important, and it will be well for us to see the limits and general nature of what it has in view. We have all heard the same objection vehemently, violently, and even coarsely urged against Thomas Carlyle . . . where in his writings is there any *expression* of this terrible heterodoxy of his? I know of none. Is it really to be supposed that Carlyle sympathizes with such revolutionary views in religion and otherwise as characterize our Buckles and our Bains, or Mills and Huxleys? No; the contrary is the truth. There is in Carlyle something like hatred for all such

[1] "Secretary" here must be a slip. Stirling was certainly *Hon. President* of the Independent Club.

views, and the whole soul of him is a reaction from infidelity to faith . . . for every human being whom Carlyle has taken from the Church, he has restored ninety-nine to it. . . . Nor with Emerson is it essentially different; there are in him, doubtless, expressions that infer heterodoxy; still religion is the very element he breathes; and the reader can hardly open a page of his, whether in poetry or prose, but he will find it so. Here, in fact, is the history of the matter. Against the unbelief of the 18th century, there was, on the appearance of our modern poetry, a complete reaction. This reaction, again, was only strengthened and deepened by the writings as well of Carlyle as of Emerson, who form no part of, but are directly opposed to, the shallow *Revulsion* (at the hands of Mill and others) under which we at present live. Each of the two, indeed, is a deep, sincere, and earnest man, who sees the universe and the divinity that is in it; and to mix up either with a Mill or a Huxley is to commit as great a mockery of the truth as to mix up a Hegel with a Strauss. . . . No; men like these—our Carlyles and our Emersons—understand the days they live in; and they would save the Bible for the people that such 'Saturday nights' as the 'Cottar's' might be long in the land. Of Emerson in particular we may almost say that *holiness* is his very attribute proper; we cannot think of him but as radiant-faced under the cathedral roof of the meeting trees, with naked front uplifted as to the stained glass windows of the coloured west. He is the dominican of the woods, water is his drink, and almost the air is enough for him."

Once in London, on the occasion of a lecture delivered by Emerson, at which Carlyle was present on the platform, Stirling had seen the two great men together; and in his article he thus describes and contrasts them:—

"What contrast it was to look upon them! Emerson the calm, the chastened, the unmoved—motionless, emotionless—a being on whom the outward world could not make a mark, but still the slouching, as it were, and retiring scholar . . . Carlyle like a wild St John of the wilderness, with fire and smoke of genius rolling through him ever; his thick dark hair (it may be, in contempt of Gall) confused upon his forehead, shutting it from view, and

the Rousseau of his nature glancing from his eye the question (I thought), Do any recognize me here? Emerson was the latest known to me, and I had but listened to his words, and ah! I said to myself, Carlyle may be the intellectual, but Emerson is the moral; Carlyle may be heart and brain, but Emerson is will, and law, and purpose; Carlyle may be motion, but Emerson is rest; Carlyle may be the *eagle* that has swept with me from my desert, but he has only borne me, nevertheless, to this *rock* Emerson."

When the Independent Club had first proposed to adopt Emerson as their candidate, some doubt had been felt as to whether, as being an alien, he was eligible for the office, and Stirling had written to various legal authorities to consult them on the question. The decision arrived at was that there was no law by which Emerson would be disqualified from being elected as Lord Rector. Stirling, then, wrote to him, offering him the support of the Independent Club, if he would consent to be nominated as their candidate; and he replied in the following letter:—

"Concord, Masstts.,
18 *March* '74.

"My dear Doctor Stirling,—Your letter, which I received a week ago, and that of the University Club, which came with it, I confess, astonished me, and, but for their agreement, I should have hesitated upon their authenticity. Of this most agreeable compliment a quiet scholar could receive, your careful and accurate statement was a perfect confirmation. I have no fancy for unnecessary voyaging, and plenty of duties here at home, being a slow workman, but I cannot find it in my heart to decline the honouring request of my correspondents to use my name, though to me it appears impossible that they should carry their point at the election. And I hope they will withdraw it at once on finding it imprudent to

proceed: and you must emphasize this wish to them. I doubt the young men have no guess how unskilful a chairman I should prove, if their remote point should be actually reached. But I am delighted by their spontaneous and undreamed-of regard, which honours both them and me. I wish no tenderness, for I have no ambition, and their own volition in this proposal is the real honour. I give you sincere thanks for your kind interest in my behalf, and the perfect information of your letter. I am recently again and again in your debt for English papers, and I enjoy all the science in them that I understand, and am always on your side. With these letters — this and one to the Committee—I carry my *Yes* to the Boston Ocean telegraph, addressed to you,—which you shall have received, I trust, a fortnight ago, when these greetings reach you from your friend,

"R. W. Emerson."

Encouraged by Emerson's gracious acceptance of their proposal, the leaders of the Independent Club threw themselves into the rectorial contest with the utmost energy and enthusiasm. The leading spirit of the group was the President of the Club, William Robertson Herkless, a young man whose intellectual ability and strength of character enabled him to surmount great physical obstacles in the way of his career. Born without the use of his lower limbs, he would not permit his infirmity to prevent his daily attendance in the class-rooms of the University during the necessary number of years before undergoing examination for an Arts and a legal degree, nor, later, did he allow it to interfere with his fulfilment of the duties of a professor in St Mungo's College, Glasgow. Stirling had the highest respect for Mr Herkless's intellectual gifts and sound judgment; and during the succeeding years, he, with his brother, Mr John

Herkless (now Professor of Church History in St Andrews University), and his brother-in-law—the Rev. John Wellwood, a young man of literary and poetic gifts—were among the most intimate, and the most esteemed, of the philosopher's younger friends.

In spite of all the efforts of the Independents, they did not succeed in securing the Rectorship for their candidate; but considering the strength of the two great political parties which they had to oppose, that they actually obtained over five hundred votes for a non-political candidate may fairly be regarded as a victory. Emerson himself so regarded it, as will be seen from the following letter :—

"CONCORD, 5 *January* 1875.

"MY DEAR DOCTOR STIRLING,—I cannot forgive myself for my tardiness in telling you how deeply I have felt your interest and care in my behalf at Glasgow. Please place it to the account of my daughter, who has spoiled her father by answering letters for him in a large variety of cases, until I have grown to a dangerous habit of postponing the most commanding duties. Yet I was and still am deeply sensible of your heroic generosity in the care of my interest in the late election. I could never from the first to the last act in the affair bring myself to believe that the brave nomination of the Independents would succeed, and could hardly trust the truth of the telegram which at last brought me so dignified a result as five hundred voters in our behalf. I count that vote as quite the fairest laurel that has ever fallen on me, and I cannot but feel deeply grateful to my young friends in the University, and to yourself who have been their counsellor and my too partial advocate. Of course, such an approach to success gave me lively thoughts of what could

have been attempted and at least approached in meeting and dealing with the University, if my friends had succeeded: but I hope the stimulus they have given me will not be wholly lost. Probably I have never seen one of these five hundred young men: and thus they show us that our recorded thoughts give the means of reaching those who think with us in other countries, and make closer alliances sometimes than life-long neighbourhood. To be sure the truth is hackneyed, but it never came to me in so palpable a form.

"It is easy for me to gather from your letters, and from those of Mr Herkless, and from the printed papers, how generously you have espoused and aided my champions, and it only adds one more to the many deep debts which I owe to you. I never lose the hope that you will come to us at no distant day and be our king in philosophy.—With affectionate regards,

"R. W. Emerson."

CHAPTER XVI

1876-1884

Presidential Address to the Glasgow University Independent Club—Accident in Orkney—*I am that I am*—Publication of *Burns in Drama*, etc.—Articles on Kant—Stirling's Conclusion regarding Kant

THE years with which this chapter deals, or, at least, the latter portion of them, might not unfairly, perhaps, be regarded as forming the Kantian period in Stirling's life. We have seen how, in 1870, Mr Hale-White had in vain urged Stirling to bring out the exposition of Kant referred to in the *Secret of Hegel*. Four years later, Mr G. H. Lewes (who, though a distinguished *littérateur*, and author of a *History of Philosophy*, is perhaps more generally known to the public as the husband of "George Eliot") kindly offered to try to make arrangements for the publication of a book on Kant by Stirling, as he had been told that Stirling was withholding such a work from publication, because he "did not feel justified in incurring the expense with so precarious a return."

This kindly offer Stirling did not see his way to accept, and it was not till seven years later (in 1881) that his *Text-book to Kant* made its appearance. In the interval, however (from 1879 onwards), a succession of articles by him on Kant were published —chiefly in American journals.

The years 1876-77 are perhaps the two consecutive years in Stirling's life, during the twenty that followed the publication of the *Secret*, in which the least philosophical work made its appearance; but it must not be supposed that the philosopher was idle during the period. In March 1876, as President of

the Independent Club of Glasgow University, Stirling took the Chair at the annual dinner of the Club, and in proposing the toast of the evening, made a speech which was described in the Press at the time as "beautiful" and "eloquent." As was of course natural, if not necessary, considering the nature of the toast, the theme of the speech was that the University is not the place, nor youth the time, for the struggle of party politics. "Why," the speaker asked, "should it be at all sought to introduce party motives, party passion, and party violence, the confusion and the tumult of the streets, into the quiet and the calm of the Academy?" And then, in a passage in which he is almost, if not quite, at his best, he continues :—

"Literature, and science, and philosophy—that is the even stratification of eternity, that is the diamond flooring of the universe. Why should such divine foundations, such majestic order, be broken up by the disturbing upthrow of the mean and transitory hour? What have the young to do with such an element? What is Whig or Tory to them? Why, a single image, the turn of a phrase, a single golden word is more to them than all the party strifes that have divided the country since the Revolution and the Settlement. . . . The student is the denizen of a temple, why should its calm ether be invaded by the huckster rancidities of the shop? Disenchantment and the daily struggle will come soon enough. Why grudge young men the cathedral quiet, the œcumenical serenity, of the few years that lay the foundations of their manhood? Surely it is not good that party political bias—often, too, for life—should be forced upon our young men before they have come, in very many cases, to form a single thought of their own on the subject of politics at all. . . . A University is for the Universal, not for the Particular; for principles, and not for the hungry struggles of the individual. . . . They [political opinions] are convictions with the fewest, and but inheritances of blood with most. How, then, the influence of the Independent Club is to act beneficially here is at once obvious—by example, namely, and by delaying considerations of politics till the resultant principles would be principles of one's own, and of ripe validity."

Surely, only a little reflection is required to convince anyone of the truth of both assertions maintained here—that a University is not the fit arena for party strife, and that student years—the years before life has brought "the drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit of wisdom"—are not the time to take part in it.

It is probably to 1876 that two undated letters, addressed to Mrs Stirling, belong. The philosopher had taken a little holiday to his beloved Firth of Clyde; and after spending a night at Rothesay, had gone to Gourock, the view from which he believed to be the finest in the world. It is from the hotel at Gourock that the following little letter—given here as an example of Stirling's familiar style—is written:—

"My dear Jeanock,—Ain't I good? I did not expect to be here, but here I *is*.

"Got up shortly after 7—breakfasted about 8—ate 2 eggs and ham in proportion—drank two large cups of coffee. Walked to Schoolock by Ascog—returning over hill—an hour and 20 minutes the one way—½ hour less the other. Steamer to Innellan, Wemyss Bay, Largs and Millport. Return to Innellan—thence here. Have just had tea and a steak. Morning fine—afterwards rather leaden and brown—east wind. Rothesay delightful—after all, nothing like view from Ashton [by Gourock]—More at home here. To-morrow by Kilcreggan to Gareloch. Love to all my darlings.—Ever affectionately your James."

In July of the following year (1877) Stirling broke through his usual habit of taking his holiday down the Clyde by going on a very short trip to Orkney—with unfortunate consequences! Starting from home on a Tuesday, he writes from Inverness on the evening of the same day: "The scenery was well worth seeing . . . Still there is nothing like

the Clyde. For beauty or for roughness, you have on the Clyde what nothing on this ride will come up to." On the following evening he wrote from Dingwall, where he stayed the night, taking train on the morning of Thursday to Thurso, whence he crossed over to Stromness. It was on the day after his arrival at Stromness (Friday) that his accident occurred. He was hurrying home to his hotel, late in the evening after a trip to Kirkwall, and, thanks to the gathering dusk and his own short sight, did not observe the kerb-stone before the door of the inn (the streets being everywhere else level and pavementless), tripped, and fell with force, breaking his right arm above the elbow.

With his characteristic determination he did not permit himself to believe what he did not want to believe—that the arm was broken—declined to have a doctor summoned, and resolved that the accident should not delay his return on the following morning. He got through the night as well as he could, and with the help of the "Boots," managed to get his clothes on, and his bag packed in time to catch the steamer that sailed for Thurso at eight in the morning. Passengers were rowed out to the steamer in a small boat, and the most terrible moment for Stirling was when he was hoisted, helpless, up the side to the steamer's deck. He travelled all that day (Saturday) and the following night, taking no food in case of inducing fever; and arrived at home on Sunday morning, with his right arm in a sling, and a bag in his left hand, dirty, dusty, haggard and worn-looking, but indomitable still, and even triumphant at having accomplished his purpose. Even after finding himself at home, it was some time before he could be persuaded that the arm was really broken, and that a doctor should be sent for. In spite of the delay which had taken place between the accident and the setting of the arm, the break healed well and rapidly, and in a

very short time the patient was up, and going about his usual avocations.

The only writing of any sort which Stirling seems to have published in 1877 was the strange lines, *I am that I am: an Interpretation and a Summary*, which appeared in the October number of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.

The lines in question, if not always musical or poetic, are unquestionably impressive, and perhaps also valuable as in some sort a summary of the Hegelian system. The following short extracts are surely striking and suggestive :—

> "I never was, nor will be, but I am;
> And all that was, or will be, is but Me.
> Here is the mystery, and here the veil
> That never was by mortal man upraised.
> Hearken! *There is*, and *that* there is, is but
> The one necessity, th' eternal *must:*
> Matter that, starred into itself, is form,
> And form that, struck, even as a crystal struck,
> Is matter. . . . . .
> . . . . Yea, I am one;
> But my own ratio fills me, which, secerned
> Apart from me, is no more me, but mine—
> The world!—even externality in play.
> One absolute proportion is the whole,
> One sole relation, whose correlatives
> Are at once the multitudinous vast
> And unity—finite and infinite,—
> Matter and mind,—the creature and its God."

Perhaps to one who knows nothing of Hegel, these lines may appear merely vague and general; but anyone acquainted with the Hegelian system will see in almost every line a definite meaning.

The lines quoted above are followed by others containing, as it were, the moral of the piece :—

> "Enjoy
> Thou me, and let my will be thine alone:
> The one is many, and the many one.
> Herein is peace divine, and the great life
> That is the All—: Shakespeare and Socrates,
> And poets old, prophets and saintly priests,

> The woods, the sea, the glory of the stars,
> Man and the life of man, in streets, in fields,
> Children and the woman by the hearth—Love!
> Nor doubt that He, Jesus of Nazareth,
> Will make thee sweet in life, and in death mine."

In the following year (1878) Stirling included the above lines in the volume which he published, entitled *Burns in Drama, together with Saved Leaves*, to which allusion has frequently been made in the earlier chapters of the present book.

The *Burns* volume is an example of the influence of external circumstances, extrinsic considerations, on the success or failure of a book. The volume contains enough, and more than enough, if wisely placed before the critics and the public, to have made the reputation of a writer. Indeed, many writers in recent times have earned even high renown who did not possess anything like the original literary genius—the power of vivid writing, the exuberance of imagery — which is visible in almost every page of the little book. There was something in the form of the book, however—perhaps its "get-up," perhaps its title, suggesting, as it did, the clearing out of the desk—which made the smaller fry of newspaper critics fall foul of it at once, though some more thoughtful reviewers spoke of some of the pieces with warmth and enthusiasm. One, indeed, was of opinion that, "in point of general literary merit, the book is superior to anything Dr Stirling has published," and that *I am that I am* was "the most luminous piece of metaphysical poetry in existence." "But all," he concluded, "have a poetical individuality, and an imaginative grasp which enables us to endorse the opinion expressed of the author's first prose work, that his powers in this direction were sufficient to 'stock an aviary of popular poets.'"

In spite of the warm encouragement which he received from literary friends and correspondents,

such as Roden Noel, W. T. Harris (who had sat up to read the *Burns* from 9 p.m. till 4 a.m.), and George Cupples, Stirling felt keenly the unfavourable reception with which the book met from the Press in general. That he was, in a certain sense, partly to blame for this reception, he himself came to see, as is evident from the following sentence in a letter to Cupples, dated Dec. 18, 1878:—

"No more do *I* like the get-up of my last book —and you are quite right in calling it a 'mistake.' I wish I had to do it again. The preface, and the sub-preface to *Merla*, are great blunders, and I should have put no dates but the printed ones. I have given a key-note of apology for immaturity; and the reader on the outside is not to be blamed who thinks he has to do with a juvenile reprint. Now, saving the *Merla* (which some readers will think best even, for its prodigality of young wealth), there is nothing unripe in the whole volume—I should not hesitate to subscribe every other piece even at these years. Of course, *Belshazzar*, too, is a little young, and the *Blacksmith*, etc., are neither here nor there."

It is pleasing to note, however, that there are signs at present of an awakening interest in the *Burns*—an awakening sense of its value and importance. A writer in the *Glasgow Herald* of June 10 of the present year says of it:—

"One hopes that the dust on the little book was not too abundant, since it is representative of the best that the Scottish mind has thought concerning the national poet. . . . It is the secret of Burns that interests us here, and it cannot be doubted that Stirling possessed that, and, further, that in *Burns in Drama* he imparts it in singularly vivid and memorable fashion. . . . *Burns in Drama*, then, must not be regarded merely as one of a philosopher's diversions. The whole strength of the author is given to the task of interpretation. We are spared both apology and patronage. Burns reveals and criticizes himself. . . . There is something of hero-worship in *Burns in Drama*, but the worship

is offered in the Temple of Truth. One feels that, as near as may be, Stirling gives us the real Burns. . . . It was Stirling's conviction that Burns was 'sound at the core: his soul was the light of love for truth, indignant lightning at the wrong.' It is this belief, richly expressed, that makes his play one of the treasures of our literature."

In the year in which the *Burns* volume made its appearance, two of the series of articles on Kant were written, and both were published in January 1879—the one in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, and the other in the *Princeton Review*. Mr Libbey, the editor of the latter magazine, had written to Stirling, in January 1878, requesting him to contribute an "elaborate article of about thirty pages" on "the philosophy of law, or some kindred subject," the payment for which was to be at the rate of about £2, 2s. a page. Stirling replied, offering an article on "Causality"; and, the offer being accepted, the article, which was entitled *Philosophy of Causality: Hume and Kant*, was written, and sent to America in the following July. A few months later, what its author called a "consort article," *Schopenhauer in Relation to Kant*, was sent to Dr Harris for the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.

As regards the contents of those two articles, not much need be said here. They are, perhaps, too technical for a book such as the present, which does not profess to give even a superficial exposition of the philosophy with which Stirling was associated, but only at most to lead up, as it were, to the doorway of it. That doorway, as has already more than once been said, was the principle of Causality. It was to the credit of David Hume that he was perhaps the first clearly to see the importance of this principle; it was to his *discredit* that his object was to get rid of it, to rob it of its authority as a *necessary* principle, or, as Stirling at times names such principles, a *universal*. As the upholder of a

sceptical philosophy, it was his business to shake belief in all principles, all necessity. Now, there is no principle more deeply rooted in the human mind —none more invariably assumed as the basis of reasoning—than the principle of causality, *Every change must have a cause.* As has already been said, every intelligence yields to this principle an obedience as unhesitating as that which every particle of matter in the universe yields to the law of gravitation. In fact, the two principles are, in their respective spheres, the counterpart of each other; and were it possible to do away with both—with the law of gravitation and the principle of causality—the results in the world of matter and the world of mind would be precisely the same. The absence of gravitation would lead to a general dissolution of the physical universe—the break-up of the solar system, and the disintegration of the earth into its component particles; the absence of causality would dissolve human knowledge into a confused, unconnected jumble of isolated facts, and (in the practical world) would result in the paralysis of human action, as Stirling says:—

"Hume's sagacity was true to the scent here, and led him straight, as it were, to the *linch-pin of existence.* Were a man minded to establish scepticism, how could he more directly or definitively accomplish his purpose than by loosening the knot that bound an effect to its cause? Mathematics apart, it was the ground, Hume saw, of our theory and practice everywhere. Above all, it was specially the ground of *belief.* At all times that we pass from present impression to some different idea [*e.g.* from effect to cause, or *vice versa*] with *belief*, it is the principle of causality mediates the connection, and supports the inference: evidently, then, if . . . we would shake belief, it is with that principle we must begin the attack . . . causality actually *is* the strongest principle of association. . . . We have only to attend to any one day's experience to become convinced that causality is our very genius, whether for theory or practice. Hume, then, knows well what he is about. . . . He is minded that causality should be

regarded as alone the nerve of reasoning, and into it he concentratingly eliminates all the other relations. Nero-like, he would have a single neck, and decapitate reason at a blow."

This philosophical Nero, in fact, having found causality to be the "linch-pin of existence," proceeds, as it were, to withdraw the pin, and let existence fall to pieces. The pin he finds is not composed, as is usually believed, of the iron of necessity, but of the cobweb of custom. He can find no philosophical warrant for the *necessity* which is universally believed to bind cause with effect but *custom*. Two events which have always been seen to follow each other in the same order—*e.g.*, the blowing of the wind and the rising of the waves, the lowering of the temperature and the freezing of water, the shining of the sun and the warming of the stone—become associated together in our minds as cause and effect.

"*Every change must have a cause.* Yes, said Hume, but such an affair as change can only be known by experience; without experience it would be unknown. Consequently, then, it is but a fact of experience, and, like every other such fact, we know that it *is*, but not that it *must* be. The necessity we attribute to its appearance is only a necessity of custom."[1]

It was Kant's attempt to reply to Hume here that led to his entire system of philosophy.

"Kant's whole work (and what alone led to all the others—Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) rose out of one consideration only. What was—whence was—that very strange and peculiar species of necessity to which Hume had drawn attention in the phenomena of cause and effect? That was the one spore, as it were, the bean on the stalk of which, up there in the clouds, there rests the palace of more than one giant—perhaps in dream. In a word, to Kant metaphysic itself, to us the *Kritik of Pure Reason*—nay, Ger-

[1] From Stirling's article on Kant in Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, where the relative positions of Hume and Kant are stated at the shortest and clearest.

man philosophy as a whole—has absolute foundation in the *whence* or *why* of *necessary connexion*. Such necessary connexion exhibited itself, in the course of the reflections of Kant, not as confined to causality alone, but as common (and, at the same time, peculiar) to all the propositions that collectively constituted what science there was of metaphysic proper."[1]

As was said in a former chapter in connection with Newton and Hegel, the instinct of the true philosopher leads him to be indifferent to what merely *is*—to mere fact—and to endeavour to discover what *must be*, which to him is alone *truth*. "To explain is to reduce an *is* to a *must*." Kant's whole industry was devoted to the discovery of the source and origin of the *must* that is present in Every change *must* have a cause, and other such propositions — *i.e.*, universal, necessary principles. He saw at once that Hume's explanation "custom" did not meet the case.

"If I ask you for an insight, an intellectual perception, into the *reason* of a *truth*, universal and common to us all, it is in vain to refer me to a mere *feeling*, an instinctive feeling, of my own, that has only grown up in me in consequence of my just being in the habit of, from day to day, seeing such things. When this dropping of a particle of ink occasions a stain on the paper, I am sure that there is a reason for it that does not lie in me, but in the things themselves. You cannot stave me off by saying the reason you want is just that you have seen the same thing before, and you have got into the habit of expecting it; the supposed necessity is but a *feeling* of yours. . . . The necessity of union, conjunction, or connexion in this latter case [the connexion of ink-drop and paper-stain], let its source be what it may, let it depend on what it may, let its reason, its *rationale* be what it may, lies manifestly obviously, evidently—self-evidently—in the facts themselves. It is not in me, it is not a feeling of mine; it is a thing that, as having a reason of its own, I want to see into."

So Stirling represents Kant as objecting to

[1] *Kant has not answered Hume*, article by Stirling in *Mind*, No. XXXVII. (Jan. 1885).

Hume's explanation of causal necessity; yet his own explanation—the explanation of Kant—reached after years of intellectual toil, after the erection of a huge, complicated system, Stirling finds to be, in ultimate analysis, no better, no less *subjective*, than that of Hume. "Kant has not answered Hume" is the conclusion he reaches, meaning thereby that, though Kant proved that the solution of the problem of causality offered by Hume was insufficient, that which he himself offered — infinitely more elaborate and complicated—was no more satisfactory. The source of the *necessity* of which we are conscious in such principles as Every change must have a cause, he (Kant) found in certain *à priori* forms of reasoning in the mind itself. The necessity was, in fact, simply *imposed* upon the facts concerned by ourselves.

> "Kant's position in the end is no more and no better than that of Hume himself *when he referred to instinct.* And Kant was blind to all this! The plaything, after such long years, and with such infinite toil, he had made for himself, was so beautiful that he could see naught else. An *à priori* sense, all the functions of an *à priori* understanding, discovered—enumerated even with warrant of completeness—metaphysic, pure science, philosophy at last! These balks, and beams, and cylinders, and wheels—even in their uncouthness—imposed upon all the world."

This last extract is taken from the second of the articles entitled *Kant has not answered Hume*, which appeared in *Mind* in October 1884 and January 1885 respectively, and may fairly be taken as representing Stirling's last word on the subject, though there *is* a later (in entire agreement with the above) to be found in the last but one of his published works, *What is Thought?* (published in 1900). In all his writings on Kant, the conclusion he reaches is practically the same. The following extract from an article in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* for October 1880, entitled *Criticism of*

Kant's Main Principles, is, as far as substance is concerned, identical with those given above :—

"In disputing any position, it is always not only fair, but an absolute requisite for success, to set that position accurately in the light in which it was seen by its own promoter. Now, Kant's own most general word in this reference is his adduction of the standpoint of Copernicus. . . . 'Copernicus, not getting on well in explaining the movements of the heavens on the assumption that the entire starry host turned round the spectator, tried whether it would not succeed better with him if he supposed the spectator to turn and the stars to remain at rest.' This, he intimated, is what in his own sphere he himself has attempted. If perception is to adapt itself to the object (this is the burden of his further remark), then all knowledge must be waited for, *must be à posteriori*, and *cannot be à priori;* but an *à priori* knowledge becomes quite possible in idea, should the object have to adapt itself to the perception (because then, plainly, the conditions to which it must adapt itself being discovered, would amount to *à priori* elements of actual perception). This, then, is the single Kantian point of issue; and if we withdraw it, we withdraw at once all. Now, there is no question but that this point is withdrawn. Let our perception be submitted as it may to sensational signs, it is quite certain that it attains at last to a knowledge of an independent external universe, which is in itself a rational system for our *exploitation.* So far, then, it is quite certain that Kant's idealism, like all *subjective* idealism of what name so ever, must perish, or has perished. But still it is of interest to see how, *even on its own terms*, the system is inadequate and fails."

Then after a rapid glance over the main features of the Kantian theory of perception, the article ends thus :—

"Only . . . the enormous construction has been so imposingly laid out with specious distinction, and plausible name after plausible name, that it was no wonder the brave, good, true, clear-minded, fertile-minded Kant took in—not the whole world (for we are 'mostly fools'), but his own honest and perfectly transparent self. And having said this, we need not say what may be similarly said of

the categories themselves, or any other of the main Kantian presuppositions. They are all alike—baseless contrivances (ingenious enough, laborious enough) towards the impossible realization of an equally baseless assumption."

The chain of reasoning by which Stirling was led to the conclusion indicated here is obviously beyond the scope of the present book; and we can therefore only refer any who desire to follow it out to the *Text-book to Kant*, and the various Kantian articles mentioned above. Any unprejudiced reader who will carefully study all or any of these will feel that the conclusion which Stirling reaches is unavoidable, the reasoning irresistible. Such at any rate was the opinion of the various critics and experts, who read the *Text-book* and the various articles at the time of their appearance. The reviewer of the *Text-book* in the *British Quarterly Review* said of it:—

"From the first page to the last, the capable reader feels that he is in the hands of a master for whom there are no insolubilities in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and who has overcome and resolved the difficulties which it has heretofore presented, because he has himself advanced to a standpoint in the development of philosophical thought from which he can look back upon, and take a bird's-eye view of, the whole ground. . . . But we take it that it will more and more be acknowledged the more this volume is studied that, besides interpreting and reconstructing Kant, Dr Stirling has contributed a permanent and precious possession to philosophical thought. . . . His interpretation of Kant seems to us the one intelligible exposition of the sage of Königsberg, in all he accomplished and half-unconsciously aimed at, which has yet been produced."

Another critic wrote with regard to the same book:—

"The daylight of pure intellect is everywhere, and as we go more fully into the volume, we find a mastery of imaginative, and almost picturesque, treatment which reveals that in Dr Stirling there exists the rare combina-

tion of the poetic with the scientific temperament. The biographical sketch of Kant is fresh and new. . . . Brief and compact as it is, we learn more from its few pages both of the man and the philosopher, Immanuel Kant, than could be got from many a thick volume. . . . Our conviction is that this is one of the few books that will never be superseded, and we are equally certain that no student of Kant within our universities, or outside them, can afford to dispense with it for a single day, for here he has Kant finally put before him."

Practically the same opinion is expressed in an article in *Mind* for April 1882, signed by one who now stands in the front ranks of philosophical teachers and thinkers.[1] The following brief extracts are taken from the article:—

"With laborious faithfulness and his own unique power of exposition, Dr Stirling places the theory of the *Critique* before his readers precisely as it took shape in its author's head. Every effort is made to expound from the standpoint of Kant . . . but there is no attempt at throwing into the shade the real contradictions of the theory. Kant is presented to us with all his imperfections on his head, and we are apt to wonder, before the end, how he could possibly have believed his own theory, so plainly does it show as a 'figment in the air'—'a house of straw.' In this respect, Dr Stirling's faithfulness to his original may almost be styled merciless. Nevertheless, there is the clearest evidence that it was precisely this 'figment' with which Kant supposed himself to answer Hume. Dr Stirling's rehabilitation is, therefore, a contribution of the highest value to the history of philosophy. He has done his work in such a way that it will never require to be done again."

To this published testimony, the following from private letters may be added. Writing in November 1883 with respect to Stirling's article, *The Question of Idealism in Kant*, which appeared in *Mind* for October of that year, Professor Veitch of Glasgow University says: "It has the usual characteristic grip, clearness, and *go*—go straight at it—of your

[1] Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, Professor of Logic in Edinburgh University, author of *From Kant to Hegel*, etc.

other writings. . . . The more I ponder over the Kantian position, the more I am inclined to think that you have hit the system at the heart—in quite a paragraph—*e.g.*, as that on p. 18 of your article."

Seventeen years later, on the publication of Stirling's last important work, *What is Thought?* this brief, but characteristic, note was received from Professor Simon Laurie, of whom we shall see more in a later chapter :—

"Poor Immanuel!! How will you dare to look him in the face when you get to heaven?

"S. S. L.

"*Jan.* 4/00.

"Perchance there are no categories *there*."

It will be evident to all from the above extracts, both from Stirling's own writings and those of others, that he was not in sympathy with the cry which was raised a few years ago, among certain philosophical writers and students, of "Back to Kant." Stirling had the highest regard for Kant, both as a man and a philosopher. "Kant himself," he said, "is well worth understanding, both in himself and in his writings. Few worthier men have ever lived than Kant, and few writers have said as much sound sense as he on the most important interests of humanity."[1] And again, speaking of the *Ethics* of Kant: "So much has Kant what he writes at heart here that all seems to issue at once from within him in a single breath. No purer, no more living, morality has ever been professionally produced by philosopher than glows in the *Ethics* of Kant."[2]

Nevertheless, even while admitting so much, Stirling has made it quite plain that, in his opinion, it is no longer in the vessel of Kant that the Historic Pabulum is contained; it is not in the

[1] *Kant has not answered Hume*, Part II.
[2] Article *Kant* in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.

works of Kant that we shall find "the choicest aliment of humanity — such aliment as nourishes us strongly into our true stature." Philosophy has moved beyond Kant; the Historic Pabulum has passed into the vessel of a philosopher whom Stirling does not hesitate to describe as "even infinitely deeper" than Kant. Kant's real value to philosophy is historical—he forms an indispensable link in the chain of the Philosophic Succession. But for the Categories of Kant we should not have had the system of Hegel. "Who sees that a touch converts Kant into Hegel, and yet that the latter, after all, is to the former very much as reality to dream?"[1]

"But be that as it may, and assuming the constructions of Kant to prove in themselves neither a solution for the problem of the universe, nor yet for the problem of causality, we have still to bear in mind what *suggestion* in his regard means . . . the truth is that it is to Kant we owe—with discount only of all necessary historical addition—our entire metaphysical material at present. Really, whatever metal of speculation is anywhere turned out now, the *ore* of it was Kant's.[2]

"There was but one movement, and every one of the four [Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel] accepted it. . . . This movement is to be called Kantian, and Kantian alone; for it was Kant began it, and throughout its whole course, the one simple and single pivot of it was expressly and exclusively Kant's."[3]

Nevertheless, while admitting what is stated in this last extract — that the whole movement of German philosophy, from Kant onwards, may not unjustly be called Kantian, since it originated with Kant, Stirling declares, in the very book from which that extract is taken (*What is Thought?*), that "return to Kant" is impossible. We can *not*, he says, "return to Kant . . . if we must return—

[1] *Schopenhauer in Relation to Kant.*
[2] Article *Kant* in *Chambers's Encyclopædia.*
[3] *What is Thought?* p. 390.

foundationally—and do return, to his Apperception and his Categories — we can *not* return to his *theoretical* philosophy as a whole, much as we may rise to the truths in his *practical* philosophy."

"It is the Categories of Kant *made* Hegel," he says (in the *Categories*, p. 151). "Yes! but what did Hegel make of *them?* His score of volumes—his whole twenty-one volumes—are *his* making of them."

Finally, to conclude the subject of Kant here, this sentence from *Kant has not answered Hume*, may be given as Stirling's last word with regard to it: "The blunder itself [*i.e.*, Kant's blunder], if it is a blunder, has been the source, perhaps, of *the most prodigious truth.*"

CHAPTER XVII

GENERAL—PARTLY RETROSPECTIVE

Domestic Events in the "Seventies"—Stirling's Daily Routine—His Friends and Acquaintances in the "Eighties"—Publication of *Community of Property*—His Political Creed—*Philosophy in the Poets*

THE desire to preserve the continuity of the subject (*i.e.*, to complete the survey of Stirling's writings on Kant) resulted, in the last chapter, in the abandonment, to some extent, of the strict chronological order which has been observed throughout the present volume; and it is therefore necessary to glance backwards at one or two events in Stirling's personal life, which took place before the appearance of some of the Kantian articles.

It was during the "seventies," and therefore before the publication of the *Text-book to Kant*, that Stirling and his family removed from the house at Piershill in which they had lived since 1861 to the one in which the remainder of the philosopher's life was passed. It was situated on the north side of Edinburgh, close to the sea, from which Stirling never liked to be far distant, and about half-way between Leith pier and Granton breakwater, which for many years alternately afforded him his daily "constitutional" walk. The marriage of his eldest daughter (the little girl whom he had nursed through scarlet fever), some years after the removal to the new house, completed the dispersal of the elder portion of his family of seven, leaving with him only the "three little ones," who were privileged to tend both their parents in their old age. Thus, during the period covered by last chapter, Stirling's

household had shrunk to the size which it retained till 1903, and his life had settled into the channel in which it continued to flow, almost without a break, for over thirty years.

One day in his life was very much like another; and as he grew older he became more and more averse to any change in his daily routine—or to any disturbance of his "usual" as he called it. He rose at eight; and if the weather permitted, took a walk round his garden, and then looked over his letters and his *Scotsman* till breakfast-time at nine o'clock. After breakfast, he retired to his study, where another half-hour or so might be given to his newspaper and his correspondence, after which the rest of his morning was devoted to philosophy, either to writing, if he happened to be engaged on some book or article, or to studying some philosophic work. In later years, his attention, during his working hours, was occupied almost exclusively by Aristotle and Hegel. Their principal works were always within easy reach of the chair in which he invariably sat, and he regarded them as the culmination and epitome of philosophic thought in ancient and modern times respectively.

A light—very light — luncheon, consisting generally of no more than a biscuit and a glass of sherry, was followed by the usual daily walk, either alone, or, more frequently, accompanied by some member of the family. On returning from his walk, the philosopher retired once more to his study, where he usually remained till dinner-time. During this portion of the day, however, the study of Aristotle and Hegel was varied by some lighter reading. Stirling enjoyed an exciting novel or romance, the reading of which he described as an "intellectual bath."

Dinner was followed by the first pipe in the day. After dinner and the pipe, there was another hour or two in the study with books; and then

A CORNER OF THE PHILOSOPHER'S STUDY.

(From photo by James Murdoch, Esq.)

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the "games" with a daughter—cribbage, ecarté, draughts, backgammon—over a second pipe, and a tumbler of toddy, brought the day to a close. On Sundays there were no games. Instead, there were long talks over the nightly pipe—reminiscences of the past, enthusiastic monologues on Shelley, or Keats, or Milton, or Tennyson, interspersed with quotations from memory; lively discussions of the various generals of history, with descriptions of battles; vehement denunciations of the shallow *Aufklärung* of the times, and of its votaries; exhortations to subject the Particular to the Universal.

Occasionally, of course, this daily programme was varied by a call from a friend, either in the afternoon, or to smoke a pipe in the evening; or by two or three friends coming to dine *en famille;* and once a year, usually in August, there was a month's visit to the beloved Clyde.

In a letter dated March 11, 1882, and addressed to Dr Ingleby, then on a short visit to Edinburgh, Stirling describes himself as a "perfect hermit"; and doubtless many people, who were ignorant of the facts of the case, regarded him as such. As has already been said in the previous pages, however, he was naturally of a social disposition, and it was circumstances, rather than choice, which drove him, to some extent, into retirement, though naturally, in course of time, habit engendered a dislike to what is conventionally called society. In the letter referred to he writes thus:—

"Do not take it amiss if you do not find me out among them. . . . I have not gone out for years. Harris was here from America, and I had to take him to Laurie's to an early dinner of a Sunday, when we were alone with Laurie and Mrs Laurie. Once in ten years my wife and I have dined with our Minister (Dr Mitchell of S. Leith)—and even then there was formal speech or proviso that I might allow myself an exception for my Minister.

(Of course, with you, your church-incumbent, clergyman, what not—priest even. Minister must sound awkward to an English ear.) I have also dined once or twice with Alexander to meet Sam Bough (now gone, poor fellow!) and one or two other sort of *garçon* friends. But that is the sum.—Ah! I promised Masson, if he would not make it an 'out'; but when he did invite wife and self (which was not long ago), it was to meet Bain and wife, and my wife wrote declining, referring to passages between B. and myself which might render my company unpleasant to B., and so it would be wrong in me to present it. . . . Were it not for my backgammon, cribbage, ecarté, draughts with Flossie[1] (had to give up chess—she beat me so) after nine every night (but Sunday), I suppose I should die of blue mould!"

This letter — evidently written in a fit of depression—really seems to acquit the writer of the charge of "hermit" which he is attempting in it to prove against himself, for it shows that he possessed a considerable number of friends and acquaintances, even if his intercourse with them was usually of an informal nature. The "Harris" mentioned above is, of course, Dr W. T. Harris of St Louis, editor of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, who had stayed a few days with Stirling and his family—probably in 1881. On the occasion of his brief visit a few congenial friends had been asked to meet him at dinner and luncheon; and the visit of Dr Ingleby to Edinburgh, early in 1882, had been the occasion of another quiet dinner-party and luncheon-party. The "Alexander" referred to in the letter was Patrick Proctor Alexander (generally spoken of by his friends as "Pat"), a man of literary tastes, author of clever skits on

[1] His fourth daughter, who, at as early an age as eight or nine, showed a remarkable natural aptitude for chess, and has since been three years in succession Lady Chess Champion of Scotland.

Mill and Carlyle, and a pretty frequent guest at bachelor dinners in Stirling's house. Of "Laurie" (Professor Simon Somerville Laurie) we shall see more further on. He became, if he was not already in 1882, Stirling's most intimate friend.

Besides the names which occur in the passage quoted, other friends are mentioned in the letter from which it is taken. Altogether, no fewer than eleven names occur in the course of the letter, all of them those of personal friends of Stirling's, more or less intimate. There is mention of Blackie as calling "with Mrs Blackie." This, of course, is John Stuart Blackie, the mercurial genius, and Professor of Greek in Edinburgh University, of whom Stirling writes that "with all his eccentricity, he is really good, however." At the time the letter referred to was written, Stirling had disappointed Blackie by declining a very pressing invitation to attend a meeting of the Hellenic Club—a Greek club of a social nature, founded by Blackie, which met once a fortnight during the winter at the houses of the various members—but, at a later date, he attended the meetings pretty regularly, and invited its members, on several occasions, to meet in his house. Professor Campbell Fraser is also alluded to, and Grainger Stewart (Professor of Medicine in the University), with whom Stirling was on very friendly terms, and "Bishop," whom he elsewhere names "el Amim." Bishop belonged to a younger generation than the others mentioned above. He had come from England to study medicine in Edinburgh, bringing letters of introduction to Stirling, who, in the course of the years during which the younger man became, first, assistant to Lister, and afterwards a practising surgeon in Edinburgh, came to have a high esteem and warm affection for him. Later, Dr Bishop married the well-known traveller and writer, Miss Isabella Bird, and died while still comparatively young.

In the last paragraph of Stirling's letter of March 11, 1882, there occurs the name of a younger than Bishop—of one who now occupies a high place among living philosophic teachers.

"A handsome volume just come in," Stirling writes, "*The Development from Kant to Hegel*, with chapters on the Philosophy of Religion, by Andrew Seth,[1] M.A., Assistant to the Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, etc. I have not read a word of it yet—it just came with your letter—but I see it bristles on every page with the names Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling."

In the years that followed, Mr Seth, and his brother James, now Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University, became pretty frequent visitors at Stirling's house, and among the more intimate of his younger friends.

Besides all these, as we advance into the "eighties," other names, unheard for years, seem to re-echo with the old familiar ring, other faces, never to be seen again in this world, rise up with startling vividness out of the mists of time, and little incidents, half-forgotten, once more enact themselves. Amongst the once familiar, but long unheard, names is that of "Greek Veitch," as he was called by his friends—Dr William Veitch, author of a well-known scholarly book on the "Greek Verb." He died, in 1885, at the age of ninety-one, and was therefore, in the early "eighties" of the century, well advanced in his. An old bachelor, with no link with the rising generation, he belonged entirely to that which had passed away. When one saw the thin little old man tripping down one of the steep streets, with which Edinburgh abounds, with the mechanical nimbleness of an automaton in motion, his white cotton socks visible beneath the edge of his old-

[1] Now Seth Pringle-Pattison, Professor of Logic in Edinburgh University.

fashioned trousers, and his black silk "stock" above his old-fashioned coat and vest, his old-fashioned tall hat thrust backwards on his head, his chin sunk forwards on his chest as in profound meditation, while a smile of infinite self-satisfaction elongated the mouth sunk between the toothless jaws, one felt as if one were looking on the animated portrait of some forgotten ancestor.

Veitch's was one of the faces which was occasionally seen at Stirling's table. Others were those of men of a much younger generation—Robert Adamson, afterwards Professor of Logic in Glasgow University, and R. B. Haldane, who have already been mentioned; David Balsillie, later Governor of Donaldson's Hospital; and David Ritchie, who became Professor of Logic in St Andrews University, and died in 1903 still comparatively young. In the "eighties," these men and others would meet now and then at Stirling's table at informal luncheons, at which the "Categorical imperative," the "Thing-in-itself," the "Kantian schematism," etc., would pass as lightly from lip to lip as the weather and the crops at other tables—to the awe, admiration, and, it must be admitted, secret envy, of some of the youthful uninitiated present! Occasionally, too, they would meet at informal dinner-parties, where jokes and good stories took the place of the Categorical imperative and the Thing-in-itself, and were followed, in the drawing-room, by music, or by an occasional recitation from the philosopher. Stirling had a strong sense of humour; and it was hardly possible to please him better than by telling him a really good story.

This very slight sketch of Stirling's friends and disciples of the "eighties" would be very incomplete without some mention of three men of a younger generation, whom the philosopher used to call affectionately, "the three cavaliers." One of the three has already passed away. He was Alexander

Anderson, known as "the Surfaceman," author of four volumes of verses, the best known of which is entitled *Songs of the Rail*,—a man for whose sincerity and warmth of nature, as well as for his literary enthusiasm, Stirling had a warm admiration. It was Anderson who, in reference to the military character of Stirling's appearance (often remarked on) used to greet the philosopher with a military salute, and the words, "Mon général!"

The other two "cavaliers" were Dr P. Hume-Brown, now Professor of History in Edinburgh University, and the author of several well-known books on the subject—a man of great fineness of character and intellect, and a keen literary critic as well as a historian—and Dr David Patrick, editor of *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, a man of wide learning, and one of Stirling's most faithful and most valued friends. He was the last person outside the family to touch the philosopher's hand, or to look upon his face.

During the later "eighties," and far on into the "nineties," no event gave Stirling greater pleasure than a quiet dinner-party, at which "the three cavaliers" were the only guests. During the meal, the talk moved lightly from grave to gay, the philosopher at one moment kindling into eloquence at the name of Keats, or Shelley, or Tennyson, the next rendered inarticulate by the humour of a story which he was vainly trying to tell between bursts of laughter. In the drawing-room there would be music of the kind that Stirling loved—generally gay, cheerful German student songs, with a rousing chorus in which the party could join, while the host sat delightedly beating time. He was far from being musical in any technical sense; he had practically no sense of either melody or harmony, but he had a very quick ear for time, as was shown by his keen appreciation of the rhythm of poetry, and he enjoyed very much a quick, lively movement in music.

If his youngest daughter, Lucy, who inherited from her mother a fine natural voice, and was then under bondage to a singing-master, endeavoured to raise the level of the music by singing one of the high-class songs she was learning with her teacher, she elicited at once from her father an impatient,—"No, no, not that drone! Give us something lively!"

Nevertheless, although he could not be called musical, it is a fact that on one of the rare occasions on which he solaced an idle hour with his flute (on which he had learned to play such masterpieces as *Lilla's a lady*, and *Freut euch des Lebens*) Stirling actually struck out (or should one say *blew* out?) an air, which he was able to write down!

It was well for Stirling—as it is for us all!—to be able to form ties of friendship with a younger generation; for the old links were breaking. In the year in which the *Text-book to Kant* appeared, his master and friend of forty years before, Thomas Carlyle, passed away, and was followed to the grave the next year by the great American writer, whose name was so often associated with his—Ralph Waldo Emerson. In a letter to Stirling, dated 1st May 1882, Dr W. T. Harris refers to Emerson's death in a short paragraph which absolutely demands a place here.

"Yesterday," he writes, "we buried Mr Emerson, and Concord will never be Concord again so long as time endures. The event quite turned the heads of all the people high and low. They could not conceive or realize the thought of losing the serene presence of that great man. He had been all those years most thoughtful of the welfare of his humblest neighbours, never omitting any little attentions that he could show them. His manner was so stately, and yet so gracious, that even his smile, as you met him on the street, was a benediction."

This beautiful tribute to a beautiful soul Stirling

could appreciate thoroughly, for he himself, as we have already seen, had the very highest admiration and reverence for Emerson. "I hold Emerson," he writes to Ingleby, "to have been naturally a richer and more original writer than Carlyle, and in manhood even infinitely his superior." And in another letter to the same correspondent: "That is genuine intellect, and genuine manhood, if you like. The gold of his [Emerson's] first essays is virgin and inexhaustible."

Stirling was now a man in his early "sixties," and taking, to some extent, that place to the rising generation which Carlyle had held for him as a youth —the place of guide and teacher. In 1884 he was, on three occasions, requested to address bodies of young men, either personally, or in writing. On the first occasion, he was asked to send a "message" to the Blackfriars Bible Class at Aberdeen. Short though the message was, it was written from Stirling's own philosophical standpoint, and contained a sentence or two which deserve to be remembered.

"As regards 'advice,'" he writes, "I would desire to point out that man is the only animal that is capable of it —either to give or receive. The lower animals have instinct only. Some of them, it is true, are susceptible of a series of acts essentially mechanical in their nature, by long-continued artificial and artful training; but most of them are what they are, not through themselves, but *through a reason that is not their own.* Not one of them is, as we say, *open to advice.* That, then—advice—every young man should regard as the privilege of that in him which raises him above the beasts that perish—as the privilege of his *reason.* . . . Then, again, practically, the most important part of every reason is the will—a faculty that cannot remain as it comes into the world, but one that must be trained, that must be disciplined. . . . Man, as he is at first, is largely a greedy *self*—a creature only of desire, and feeling, and impulse. He is not, as he enters on the scene, what he *is to be*—a personality of reason. Man, then, has, as it were, two sides—one of nature, and

another of reason; and it is his to bring about due subordination of the lower to the higher. What is mere nature in him must be reduced under, and come to obey, its appointed lord—reason. . . . He who would be anything must be able to restrain himself."

In March 1884, a promise to make a speech at the annual dinner of the Glasgow University Independent Club, of which he was President, and a request that he would touch on the Land question, led Stirling to write his pamphlet on *Community of Property*. At that time the American Socialist writer, Henry George, was lecturing in Great Britain, and a report of a lecture of his gave Stirling the text for his address—which, however, was never delivered, as he saw it would occupy too much time at the dinner, and be, as he wrote to Mr Hale-White, "unfair to the young men who had also their speeches." "I simply spoke for half-an-hour to the toast of the Independent Club," he added.

Fortunately, the matter which had been got together for the speech was not wasted; but was given to the public the following year in the form of a pamphlet. So far as is possible within its limitations, the pamphlet contains a summary—very clear, if also necessarily very brief—of the views on the subject of Community of Property of Aristotle and Hegel, as well as the writer's own. Aristotle he characterizes as, "with but one exception," "perhaps, in all these ages, by far the weightiest writer that ever wrote on Practical Philosophy." The "one exception" is Hegel, who is described as "the only true master-writer on politics since Aristotle."

Perhaps the most valuable portion of the little book are the pages in which the writer deals with the questions of the nationalization of land, and the nature and origin of rent. Mr Henry George had declared that the nationalization of "capital, machinery, and the like," would be unjust, since it

would involve the robbery of the actual owner; but that there would be no injustice in the nationalization of land, since "land is not the product of human labour." To this Stirling replies as follows:—

"He [Mr George] might just as well have said that a house is not the product of human labour: the land in itself is quite as worthless as the stones in the rock. *It is the labour alone in either case that gives the value.* . . . He admits that it would be 'unjust to nationalize capital, machines, etc.' Perhaps here Mr George sees that capital, machines, etc., really represent labour, bodily and mental . . . but *lands are as much accumulated labour as bank-stock is.* The spoliation of the Tory landlord were quite as unjustifiable as the spoliation of the Radical manufacturer. What you despoil in either case is *accumulated labour.* Nay, if there is a difference, the difference is on the side of land, and the spoliation of capital is the more justifiable; for *profits*, *unlike rent*, may be said to *come out of the wages of the labourer.* . . . Mr George would spare the capitalist, but he would victimize the landlord. And yet the landlord does not take one farthing out of the fund that pays the labourer [*i.e.*, profits]; while for his part, the capitalist really diminishes it by that entire moiety which is termed profits of stock."

This leads to the question of the nature or origin of rent. If, as stated in the above passage, rent does not come out of the wages of the labourer, whence does it come? The answer is that it arises *from the inequality of nature.*

"*A* goes before *B* to a new country, and *B* before *C*. *A* takes the best land, *B* the second best, and *C* has left for him only what is inferior. *A* and *B*, then, with the same labour, produce more than *C*—produce, compared with *C*, a surplus. It is quite evident, accordingly, that it will be the same result to *C* whether he continues to work his own land, or whether he agrees to work that of *A* or *B*, with sacrifice of the respective surplus—rent, which consequently does not enter into price, or the exchangeable value of the produce. *C* sold his crops and paid his labourers quite as *A* and *B* did; but *A* and *B* alone had a surplus—a surplus that remained *after* wages, etc., were

paid. . . . It [rent] is in a certain way a necessity—a fatality, if you will—of nature itself; and were it remitted to-day, it would be in full operation to-morrow. But it cannot be remitted. Remission of rent, *so long as population compels cultivation of inferior soils*, or, rather, as it may be put, *so long as soils under cultivation . . . vary in their advantages, natural or accidental.* . . . Rent occurs when the population is such that even the cultivation of the inferior lands will yield a profit . . . competition will readily work the superior lands *with sacrifice of the surplus returned by their superiority—namely, rent.* . . . If I have twice the strength of another man, or twice the skill, and so double his production, I get twice the pay; and that is a natural advantage of which I cannot justly be deprived. In like manner, if my land have naturally a better soil, or if as regards markets it be better placed than another, by nearness, say, direct or indirect (mode of transit—railway, river, sea, good high-road, etc.), it is quite unavoidable that, in the event of my finding it desirable to let or sell, I should look for compensation for the advantage. . . . So then it is that rent arises, and we have thereby a class at leisure and above the necessities of ordinary life."

While, as we have seen, Stirling denounces as injustice the proposal to deprive the landlord of his land, he is equally decided in condemning the employment of land which is capable of supporting men for the support of deer only.

"If such and such a mountain can only grow deer; or if such and such another can only grow sheep; and if there is no labour possible for man on either but that of the gamekeeper or the shepherd, then, even in the name of common-sense, let the deer, the sheep, the gamekeepers and the shepherds be the only inhabitants. But if the one mountain or the other can support men, then, surely, it is not too much to say—let them support men, and not only deer or sheep with their mere accessories, human or other. . . . This, too, is plain that, if it can be shown that *sport*—let it concern fox, or hare, or wood-cock, or whatever else—interferes in the slightest with the means of subsistence of the community, then sport must similarly, at once and for ever, be interdicted."

As bearing on the question of Stirling's political

and social views, the following letter to Mr Hale-White, dated Jan. 17, 1885—about the time that the pamphlet on *Community of Property* made its appearance—is given here in full :—

"My dear Mr Hale-White,—Thanks for your letter which I have read with much interest. The *negative* you paint is black enough; and no doubt society is afflicted with many evils. Mere daily life, as it is there before us, is but a scene of perpetual fluctuation and constant contingency, of boundless extravagance, as well as of infinite indigence, of physical, at once, and moral, degradation. These last words are but an adaptation from memory of a passage in Hegel, and you will admit, from them, that Hegel must have *seen the negative;* and yet the modern state he defends against the Grecian, as being to him, in that sphere, the veritable *evolution* of the *notion* into the *idea*—the *realization* of all the constituent *moments*, each into *independent completion and life*. He sees the shadow quite as clearly as anybody else, but I fancy he says a shadow must be. It is the sun of right itself that brings the shadow of wrong. *Up* itself is only possible through a *down*. The question, indeed, is, Are not evils proportionably less now than in the whole world's history before? Think of the slaves in Greece and Rome—think of the Middle Ages when walls six feet thick had to be built to guard a man's life and a woman's chastity. *It will not do to dwell upon the negative alone*. To view *it* only can only drive us mad. I am not sure, either, that your own cases are the worst. In actual government there must be friction. No doubt it is principally carried on by the permanent employés, who will never be perfect. But, really, is it in the power of society to make clay gold? The cultivation of the land must be; but it is utterly impossible to make all the relative workings

sweet. The Pimlico landlord is not worse than any other. In the immense modern populations, the outskirts—the *Poebel*, the *Canaille*, the pauper class from *ignavia*, vice, drink, even misfortune—must also be immense. Even the *Poebel* must have dens to suit their circumstances. Will you lodge and clothe and board the Ishmaelite, who *will* get up and shake himself, and go out to provide himself from the first accident of the streets, and who returns to his straw quite contented with the bellyful of gin the street accidents have brought him—the Ishmaelite *who will live thus*, do as you may? You have fed, clothed, educated, and given a profession to, such and such a Samoyed, say. He practises it for years, and is a most intelligent and 'respectable' man, but one fine morning he runs off to his tribe, and strips himself naked, etc., etc. No power on earth can change these things. The landlord cannot always drive dens from his property. *Dens there will be.* Then again you cannot blame a proprietor whose property improves. There is a house in Friday Street, say, the centre of the city—Now not a furlong is added to the circumference of London that does not add a pound or two to the value of the piece of ground it stands on. How are you to help that? *We have no rights against nature*, and such as that is simply a necessary law of nature. The Pimlico property is now a property—something in which accumulated labour can store itself. Perhaps at present there is only one proprietor, there might be a thousand, and the state of the case would be quite the same. If the proprietor raises the rent, he can do so in relation to a general standard. He is utterly unable, even at Pimlico, to put on what rent he pleases—*with* occupation.

"There *is* a horrible negative; but there is also a grand affirmative. Never, in the world's history, was there for the individual, be he who

he may, such intellectual, moral, and physical liberty as there is now. What is any lord nowadays to the commonest scavenger? I am a Conservative, but it is not as the common Tory for class privileges and mere tradition: it is only for organization. And it seems to me at present as if, in the tendency to an extreme democracy, we were losing the balance of our constitutional state. In a state *there must be a principle of central authority*. Now that appears to be vanishing from England. Mr Gladstone is our ruler; but he rules only for realization of—himself—he will do any mortal thing to gain the votes of those who enable him only to—realize himself. It is to be feared that English statesmanship is coming to that 'in the general.' Our government by parties, each watching the other, seems disappearing; and there is only one party—the party that calls for nothing but—disintegration, more and more disintegration.

"My hope was that '*liberté*' being realized, we should now go on to '*égalité*'—you will call me a queer Conservative! I have no belief in the fiction of blue-blood—rather a contempt, perhaps, for him who has. We cannot help people having interest in, and so smoothing the path for, Goethe's grandsons! But I do not see that that is the same thing as to look with awe upon a weak man, who can show a mere list of grandfathers—all of them titled perhaps, rich perhaps, but most of them ordinary enough perhaps, most of them vicious perhaps. I think *we should do all we can now to realize equality between man and man—leaving each his own vitality of action and consequent inevitable resultant inequality*. I would give titles only to office-bearers, and only so long as office was actually held, though powerless to prevent the weaker brothers from continuing the titles through fawning even then.

"But that is not enough. Liberté and égalité both realized, I would take up 'fraternité,' and see

what I could do with it. And then, even with a properly-balanced constitutional state, I have no doubt much could be done in mitigation of what I call the shadow—your *negative*.

"But the chances are that under this modern liberalism, with Gladstones and disgusting, lying, false, insolent Harcourts to lead it, we are simply returning to our woods again—what Darwin would call the civilization of the Chimpanzee and the Gorilla!

"Well, then, I think you will call that enough—dashed off from the reading of your letter! If I offend in the use of any of these names, please to forgive me, and keep the circumstance to yourself. —Yours very truly, J. H. STIRLING."

It is twenty-six years since this letter was written, yet all that is said in it with regard to the state of affairs then might be said with equal truth at the present time. Is it not true to-day that "in the tendency to an extreme democracy, we are losing the balance of our constitutional state"? Is it not true still that, "our government by parties, each watching the other, seems disappearing; and there is only one party—the party that calls for nothing but—disintegration"?

The letter is interesting as containing the expression of Stirling's political creed. When a man calls himself a Conservative, as Stirling did to the end of his days, he is apt to be regarded as a narrow-minded, prejudiced old fogey, with no desire for progress and reform, no wish for the welfare and advancement of humanity, no interest in anything but the preservation of the privileges of his class. How far Stirling was from being the Tory of the popular imagination, one has only to read the above letter to see. He was, he says there, a Conservative, *not* "for class privileges and mere tradition," but "only for organization." That is, he would

retain the *balance of the constitution*—the form of government, which has gradually grown up through the centuries of Britain's history, and is the outcome of the practical wisdom of generations of able men. He would retain the balance of the constitution, but he would do away with "class privileges." His aims he states in the words of the Red Republicans of Paris a century and more ago—he desires to realize "*liberté, égalité, fraternité.*" But the liberty which he would realize is that which is consistent with obedience to a strong central authority; the equality at which he would aim is not the equality of the Socialist (who would make the sluggard equal to the man of energy, and the imbecile equal to the man of genius), but such equality as is in harmony with the natural *in*equality of man and man; and lastly the fraternity which he would like to see among mankind is not that which could be brought about by legislation, by a community of property—by taking from those who have, to give to those who have not. Any attempt to bring about fraternity by force—even by force of law—could only end in a bitter sense of wrong and injustice on the one side, and indolence and sluggishness on the other. The fraternity which the philosopher would like to see realized in society is that which would result from the gradual elevation—intellectual, moral and spiritual—of the individual, the gradual awakening of each to a sense of the essential oneness of mankind as particular incarnations of the universal reason. Such moral and spiritual elevation attained, such sense of oneness reached, the more fortunate man would voluntarily surrender some of his privileges to his less-favoured brother; and such voluntary surrender would awaken in the man benefited a feeling of gratitude, and a quickening desire to emulate the generosity of his benefactor, which no forcible distribution of goods by State machinery could ever arouse.

The concluding portion of what is said here will not, it is true, be found explicitly stated in any of Stirling's works. Nevertheless such would be the necessary practical outcome of a universal acceptance of, and obedience to, the Hegelian doctrine of subjectivity and objectivity, of the relation of the Particular to the Universal. When one considers all this, one cannot wonder at Stirling's naïf exclamation: "You will call me a queer Conservative!"

The third occasion, during 1884, on which Stirling addressed a body of young men was when, in November of that year, he delivered a lecture to the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh University on *Philosophy in the Poets*, which, at the request of the audience, was afterwards printed. The theme of the lecture, as its title indicates, is that unconscious, unformulated philosophy which we find in the greatest poets, and especially — so Stirling believed—in our great English poets.

"There are plenty of poets in other countries, and great ones, too—a Homer, a Dante, a Calderon—but still we rarely find in them that *tone*, that peculiarity of inspiration, that constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the English poet. . . . The poet here, the Shakespeare, the Milton, veritably speaks as though in the tongue of a loftier and diviner dwelling-place. He is exalted. All externality is as if fused and harmonized and made essence in that one grand *tone* of his that is prophecy, ecstasy, inspiration itself. Here, at last, it seems to be that we have, in good truth, the *poet* with his garland, and his singing-robes about him. . . . Now, there cannot be a doubt that much of this peculiarity in the poetry of England is due, as it were, to the *mood*—the hushed, hallowed, solemnized, sublimed mood of philosophy."

It is for the reason indicated in this passage, besides the necessary limitations of space, that Stirling confined his attention almost entirely to English poets, and especially to two—Milton and Shakespeare. Milton he regarded as "the richest,

the truest, the most genuine and original pure poet that ever lived"—as well as the most musical. "There are many other poets musical," he remarks, "but they are not musical as Milton is musical." Of philosophical allusions in Milton, several examples are given, and the two following quotations from *Paradise Lost* lead to a brief discussion of the question of free-will:—

> "But God left free the will; for *what obeys*
> *Reason is free.*"

> "Since thy original lapse, *true liberty*
> Is lost, *which always with right reason dwells*
> *Twinned*, and from her hath no dividual being."

Obedience to reason, then, according to Milton, constitutes freedom; and according to Stirling, this is the highest practical philosophy.

"*That alone is free that obeys only its own self.* The universal, now, is alone my true self; and so only truly do I obey *myself* when I obey it. Then I am free; I emphatically obey *myself*. I am not *obliged* to obey any *particular* [*e.g.*, 'greeds of the senses,' 'individual passions'] . . . The lower animals *are* so obliged. They know no universal; they obey ever particulars; they follow only finite aims. Man is not so. Man is double. He is submitted, not only to the particular of the senses and passions, but to the universal of reason; and will, when it obeys the universal of reason, obeys its own self, and nothing either alien or external. Man, then, is free in that he can obey his own true will, his own true self—for his own true will, his own true self is reason. . . . He who yields to revenge, and murders, is no more free than he who yields to appetite, and gets drunk. That alone is free that obeys only its own self; but the will that murders, the will that gets drunk, does not obey, but in simple truth, *dis*obeys, its own self. . . . Man can of course set himself against this universal, and stubborn himself in himself—stubborn himself in his will simply as *his* will. He *will*, or he will *not* . . . that is precisely the opposite of free-will; that is the *particular* merely, and not the universal; that is the particular against the universal, that is bondage, slavery."

Turning to Shakespeare, whom he characterizes as "the vastest subject that ever took into himself the whole huge object"—as the man who is now judged, "by civilization as a whole," "to have taken humanity, life, the world, existence, into the widest, deepest, truest human mind that has ever confronted them"—Stirling finds in him many references, "which are almost, so to speak, professionally philosophical." After quoting the well-known passage from the *Tempest*, which ends with the words, "We are such stuff as dreams are made of," he goes on :—

"Such a passage as this in Shakespeare has that in it which a philosophical head might brood over almost for a life-time. It breathes the very spirit of idealism, and an idealism absolute. How *could* Shakespeare ever have come to have such thoughts? Those were days—those in which he lived—not of meditation and speculative melancholy, but of action, victory, triumph. The whole island was at last about to become one, the national life was concentrating itself for an imperial existence, and, in very gage thereof, had in face of the entire world stretched forth the terrible right arm that smote to shatters the seemingly irresistible power of all-dominant Spain. Around him everywhere there was but the buoyant freshness of awakening spring. . . . All breathed vigour, victory, assurance, hope; yet England's greatest spirit was only sad—Shakespeare was only sad—and looked even then, in the beginning of spring, to the far end of an ultimate winter, and an ultimate ruin! Even he himself seems surprised at this, his mood in the play, and, as it were, remonstrates with himself. As though in pain, he breaks off suddenly at the word 'sleep' and murmurs, 'Sir, I am vexed; bear with my weakness; be not disturbed by my infirmity; a turn or two I'll walk to still my beating mind.' To still his beating mind! Surely never before came there into human mind thoughts of quality to raise beating there more than those that are as a vast glory in that majestic—I may call it so—majestic *solemnization*. And how did they come to him—where did Shakespeare get them? For there is more here than the mere final consummation of all things which our religion foretells us. There is here an actual confession of complete philosophical idealism."

In connection with Stirling's opinion of the poets, expressed in the above quotations, the following passage from a letter of his to Dr Ingleby, dated March 3, 1883, may be found interesting: "I am not at all disposed to quarrel with mere subjectivities of taste; but, surely, those you mention are beyond all speech. I fancy I always speak—that is, when I address the public (God knows, I am subjective enough in private letters)—*objectively*, or from principles—reasoned principles—on these matters. *I* have no doubt that T.[1] is exactly where I put him. No man can, for a moment, stand before subjective side winds. I was simply mad about Coleridge at one time, till I got madder about Shelley, who was succeeded by a vast, but more tempered, admiration for Keats (whose prose letter—preface?—to the *Endymion* made me think and say—loudly say—and I hear it said now—he might have come near Shakespeare by-and-by)—well, now, they are all crude, incomplete, irregular—if, namely, you choose to look so. Shakespeare is, doubtless, the greatest genius that ever lived—'once you are out to the clear depths of his proper sea'—but what a noisy surf of cross Bombastes Furioso metaphor, you have often to wade through before you get there! Take the soldier's speech in the beginning of *Macbeth*, which the king talks of as being as brave and soldier-like as the man himself—it is simply monstrous and contemptible rant and fustian. Then Milton—he clearly, to my mind, is the greatest pure poet that ever existed—but what are we to say of that intolerable bosh of Father and Son?

"So it is here; your friends, as to T.,[1] simply allow themselves to accentuate the merely subjective negative he turns to them.

"Now, it is doubtless a great thing to bring out those innumerable volumes of Variorum Shakespeare,

[1] No doubt Tennyson is meant.

and there is here and there true work in them, but, do you know, I would not read them if they were given me. My Shakespeare is the ten-vol. Chiswick one, and I quite execrate it for taking me perpetually off from the text to foot-notes that only destroy my continuity of satisfaction. Give me Shakespeare, and hang up all his editors on the next tree! Emerson—well—he is a poet, and I can chant some of his verses as though I were inspired myself; but he *is* irregular, he *does* sink into prose. Longfellow is not the highest, but he is genuine—certainly more regular than E. By-the-bye, that reminds me E. admired T. [Tennyson] to adoration, and told me he had never seen a perfect statue cut of T. till he read my essay!

"Mighty sonnets,[1]—what are they to Milton's, without which they had never been? Ode to Immortality—one of my prime favourites, but look to the flat prose in it—'vision splendid' and 'attended'!

"Keble!—pooh! *I* cannot read. Bah! Bah!—that is all bosh! Man-clouds, sometimes, in turning their subjectivities out, do not quite turn out silver linings."

This is a very characteristic letter. Dashed off on the inspiration of the moment, without the slightest attempt to make a literary composition, without the slightest thought that it would ever be seen by other eyes than those of the person to whom it was addressed, it may appear to some readers abrupt in style and autocratic in spirit; but at least it shows that keen flair, that enthusiasm, for what is finest and best in any literary work, which are native to the born littérateur, and that acceptance, as inevitable, of the alloy inseparable from all human gold, which is characteristic of the philosopher. The "subjectivity" turned out by the "man-cloud" in this letter is at least not wholly without "silver lining."

[1] No doubt Wordsworth's sonnets are here referred to.

CHAPTER XVIII

1886-1890

Financial worries—Law-suit—The Gifford Lectures—Stirling's Religious Position

As far as literary or philosophical work was concerned, the year 1886 was almost a blank in Stirling's life. During the year, nothing whatever appeared from his pen save a short letter in the *Athenæum* on the "Italian Hegelians," suggested by the publication of an important work on political philosophy by Professor Levi—*La Dottrina dello Stato*. No doubt, he would have given more than a mere passing mention to a book of such importance but that, at the time it appeared, he was undergoing all the worry and anxiety connected with a law-suit, which involved the loss (if unsuccessful) of a large sum of money.

The limits of space preclude the possibility of giving here even an outline of what was at the time somewhat of a *cause célèbre*, the decision in which came as a surprise to all impartial outsiders, and seemed to make startlingly apparent the distinction between equity and legality. Stirling's friends and admirers showed their sympathy with him in a substantial form; a subscription to defray the legal expenses of the case was set on foot by a group of friends, among the more active of whom were Professors Laurie and Masson, Mr. Archibald Constable, and the Rev. James Wood—a man of literary tastes, and mild, gentle character, for whom Stirling had a warm friendship. From all over Great Britain, and from America, contributions were received. One of the largest came from

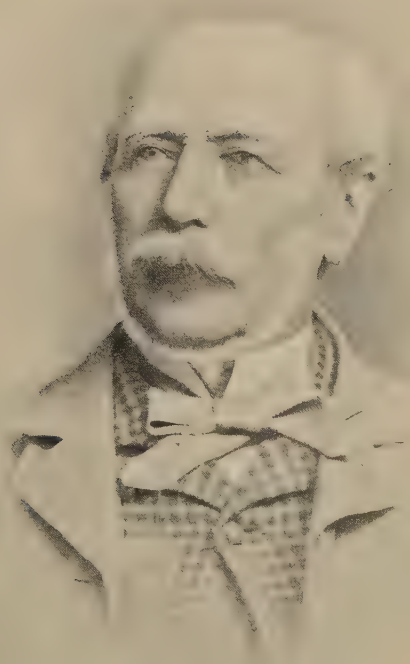
India, where Stirling had an earnest disciple in Rās bihāri Mukharji, a high-caste Hindu, and author of a translation into excellent English of Renan's *Dialogues et Fragments Philosophiques.*

The great event of the "eighties" in Stirling's life was his appointment as first "Gifford Lecturer" in Edinburgh University, and his delivery of the lectures which, under the title *Philosophy and Theology*, were published in 1890. The lectureship, with three others of the same character in connection with the other three Scottish universities, was named from its founder, Lord Gifford, who had died in 1887, leaving some £80,000 in trust to the universities for the foundation of the lectureships. The subject of the lectureships (which were not to be held for longer than two years) was Natural Theology, and the aim and intention of the testator in founding them was indicated in a sentence in his will. Feeling bound to employ the residue of his estate for "the good of my fellow-men," he considered that he could best accomplish his purpose by the institution of such lectureships. "I, having been for many years deeply and firmly convinced that the true knowledge of God, that is, of the Being, Nature, and Attributes of the Infinite, of the All, of the First and Only Cause, that is, the One and Only Substance and Being; and the true and felt knowledge (not mere nominal knowledge) of the relations of man and of the universe to Him, and of the true foundations of all ethics and morals — being, I say, convinced that this knowledge, when really felt and acted on, is the means of man's highest well-being, and the security of his upward progress, I have resolved, from the residue of my estate as aforesaid, to institute and found, in connection, if possible, with the Scottish universities, lectureships or classes for the promotion of the study of said subjects, and for the teaching and diffusion of sound views regarding them."

The appointment of the lecturers was entrusted, in each case, to the Senatus of the universities respectively; and in January 1888, Stirling was appointed first Gifford Lecturer of Edinburgh University by a large majority of the Senatus. He was afterwards informed on good authority that, had he not received the appointment in Edinburgh, two of the other universities were prepared to have elected him as Gifford Lecturer. How he himself regarded the appointment can be seen from the following letter to Professor Campbell Fraser, written a day or two after it took place (on Jan. 30, 1888), in reply to one of congratulation :—

"Very many thanks for your kind and cordial congratulations. I have been told by Professor Laurie how much you did to lead to this success, and have no doubt that, but for that, your action, this success would never have arrrived. I assure you, I truly feel, and am very grateful for, your warm and active zeal.

"You refer to our entering Glasgow College in 1833. I, too, have had the same event repeatedly in mind since Saturday. I don't know whether you joined the class while it still occupied a classroom just by the iron gate into the Professors' Court, and so had an opportunity of reading the very first of the Eclogues; but what I have had in mind since Saturday is the passage there where Tityrus answers Melibœus that what took him to Rome was Liberty which, though late, had looked back upon him, but only after his beard fell white from the razor. This is followed, I think, by *tamen respexit*. Now, I vividly recollect the light which the intellectual superiority of the Professor above the ordinary schoolmaster threw by a single word on the passage. The student *up* was just translating in the ordinary slip-slop unthinking fashion, 'nevertheless she looked back,' when Ramsay broke in with, 'That is, she DID



JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING IN 1889.
(From photo by Crooke, Edin.)

To face p. 310.

look back!' The effect of that '*did*' I have never forgotten.

"I shall allow the special application of the reference to myself (the 'lateness,' the 'beard,' etc.) to be lost in the simple *did* of the *respexit!* But I am not the less grateful to Libertas, or Universitas, or Fortuna, or whatever goddess it may be that, in the end, did look back upon me, white beard and all. At the same time, I am but too conscious of the nature of the situation to which you refer (as requiring 'wise guidance'). The rocks and shoals all about are indeed most dangerous, and it is the Delian swimmer of Socrates that is required to avoid them."

When he wrote that letter, Stirling was in his sixty-eighth year. More than once, in his early middle-age, Fortune had seemed to pass him by—more than once, as we know, he had seen men, younger and less able than himself, advanced over his head—but now that she had "looked back" upon him, he was resolved to forget her former unkindness, and to be grateful for the smile at length vouchsafed to him. The "rocks and shoals" mentioned refer to a more serious aspect of the lectureship. What Stirling meant by them is made plain in a later letter to Professor Campbell Fraser (dated Nov. 2, 1888), declining an invitation to dine on the ground of occupation.

"These lectures have given me perplexity, and make me thin," he writes. "The subject and the time seem so out of concord! Natural Religion proper, demanded by the testament, is to be found nowhere but in Paley and the Bridgewater Treatises. That is impossible now. Theism, as treated by Professor Flint, might answer the purpose; but that is theological, and already realized, or exhausted. The Philosophy of Religion sounds well; but it does not stand examination. Such an aggregate of Lives as in Pünjer would never do.

Pfleiderer, so far, is more limited, and not a bit better. Where Pfleiderer is more general, he is excellent; but that is not much. I, for my part, have no interest in the *gods!*—Egyptian, Indian, Greek, or other! Lastly, flashy flourishes *de omnibus rebus*, etc., are not in my way.

"Altogether, I have had to look in a great many directions, taking an immense number of notes that will never serve any purpose. In this way a great deal of time has been lost, so that I am sufficiently pushed at the last. I have still hope, however, to say what shall be neither irrelevant nor altogether nonsense."

This letter gives a glimpse of what was one of Stirling's most marked characteristics — his conscientiousness. If he had work to do, he would, as he has sometimes been heard to say himself, "agonize" himself in his efforts to do it as well as it could possibly be done. In the case of the Gifford Lectures, while many, perhaps most, men would simply have given a course of lectures from their own point of view (if not merely on their own subject, whatever it might be!), without troubling over-much about the wishes of the testator, Stirling felt it to be incumbent upon him to obey the instructions of the will under which he had been appointed, to meet, so far as possible, the expectations of his audience, and to be true, at the same time, to his own philosophy, his own religious views. As he himself expressed the situation in the second of his Gifford Lectures:—

"With four men, at four universities, all declaiming, year after year, on the same text, there *may* come necessity for diversion and digression; but now, in the first year, it would ill become the lecturer who was first elected on the whole foundation, and in the university at least of the capital—it would ill become him, so signalized and so placed, to set the example of an *episode*, while it was the *epic* he was specially engaged for."

For these reasons, he decided to adopt the course which he indicated to his audience thus :—

"I take the theme as it is prescribed to me—Natural Theology and the Proofs for the Being of a God. These proofs I follow historically. . . . This is one half of my enterprise. The other half—the negative half—shall concern the denial of the proofs. This session I confine myself to the affirmative; next session I shall conclude with what concerns the negative."

To the programme thus laid down, the lecturer faithfully adhered. In the ten lectures of the first session (or, rather, in nine of them, for the first was introductory), he dealt exclusively with the proofs for the being of a God—teleological, cosmological, ontological—tracing them historically onwards from the great thinkers of Greece; in the ten lectures of the second session, in which his subject was the *denial* of the proofs, he dealt more particularly with modern writers—especially with Hume, Kant, Darwin.

Though delivered in a class-room of the university, the lectures were, by the express desire of the founder, open to the public; and the application for tickets of admission was so great that, even though the largest class-room in the university was chosen for the lectures, it was found impossible to meet it. On the opening day (Saturday, Jan. 12, 1889) every seat in the room was occupied by students and the general public; and the lecturer, who was accompanied to the platform by almost the entire Senatus, was received with an ovation of applause. In spite of the large audience, which continued to attend the lectures on the Saturday mornings on which they were delivered, there were many who wished to attend, but were, for various reasons, unable to do so on the day, and at the hour chosen; and in response to a request, Stirling afterwards re-delivered the lectures in the evenings. How the audience were impressed by the lectures

may be gathered from the following extracts from letters of friends who were present.

Professor Laurie, writing on the very day on which the first lecture was delivered, says :—

"The universal opinion is highly favourable. Your Lord Chancellor's summing up of the true meaning of Gifford's will was a pure piece of analysis, and will be *permanently* valuable. The mingled dry humour and epigram and seriousness of your discourse seem to have been much appreciated."

On the following day, another friend wrote :—

"The scene, the voice, the words, the speaker's presence rise before me, a piece of Life drama the most impressive to me I have yet witnessed. . . . The event of yesterday struck me with an almost sacramental solemnity . . . the hushed and eager audience hanging on your words ; the scathing and withering scorn with which you dismissed the miserable flippancies of negation ; and the measured and weighty phrases of your own 'confession' ; the sense of the momentous issues with which you dealt . . . these and much more affected me *then* only a little *less* than does their recollection *now*."

From Professor Blackie came this characteristic sentence :—

"My dear σοφός,—Your lecture on Saturday was a decided success. You did wisely to scatter a few *lumina orationis*, as Cicero would call them, over the severity of your theme. The author of *Burns in Drama*, whom the οἱ πολλόι do not know, was manifest there."

Two later lectures at which the professor was present, awoke the poet in him, and were the source of inspiration of sonnets, which appeared in the *Scotsman*.

Only one more quotation from a private letter shall be given here. It is from a letter written when the first course of lectures was drawing near an end. "In my humble regard," the writer says,

"these lectures are the event of the hour, and promise to introduce a new era in the religious life and thinking of the country."

The opinion expressed in the foregoing extracts was practically re-echoed by the Press, when in the autumn of 1890 the lectures were published in book form, under the title *Philosophy and Theology*. By way of example, the following extract from a critique in the *Expository Times* is here quoted :—

"No more *suggestive* work on the mutual relations of Theology and Philosophy has ever appeared in our country. The present lectures form, in no sense of the word, a set treatise on the matter in hand; rather they present the ripe thoughts of a powerful and acute mind; for passages of penetrating and startling strength of insight flash out on every page, well nigh; and not seldom do we meet with splendid bursts of the highest metaphysic eloquence. Dr Stirling has, ever since the publication of the celebrated *Secret of Hegel*, been acknowledged as without a rival among metaphysicians, whether at home or abroad, and, if we mistake not, these lectures will demonstrate him to be foremost also among the masters of English prose."

It is, of course, beyond the scope and purpose of the present volume to attempt to give an exhaustive analysis of the Gifford Lectures; but no biography of Stirling would be complete which did not offer some explanation of his religious position, and of this the lectures contain the most explicit statement to be found anywhere in his writings—though, of course, indications occur *passim*. In the first lecture, Stirling himself defines his own standpoint on religious questions in unmistakable terms —unmistakable, at least, to those who have thoroughly grasped the distinction of *Vorstellung* and *Begriff*,[1] of which an explanation has already

[1] In writing to Stirling on the evening after the first Gifford Lecture, Prof. Laurie said: "*Vorstellung* and *Begriff*. Can't you somehow English these?" Stirling, however, seems to have felt that, *in the special sense in which he used them*, no English words

been attempted in the foregoing pages. He begins by stating that he is a "member of the National Church"—that is, of the Church of Scotland—and of its three sections, which he distinguishes as "Broad Church, High Church, and Low, or Evangelical Church"; it is to the third that he considers himself to belong. With regard to the other two sections, he remarks: "No doubt there is deeply and ineradicably implanted in the human soul an original *sentiment* which is the religious one; and no doubt there is as deeply and ineradicably implanted there a religious *understanding*. We not only *feel*, we *know* religion. . . . So it is that, if for me High Church seems too exclusively devoted to the category of feeling, Broad Church, again, too much accentuates the principle of the understanding."

This seems a tolerably definite confession of faith; but it is not precise enough for the lecturer's fastidious conscience. He goes on thus:—

"I point out *this difference* between them [*i.e.*, the three sections of the Church] and me that what they possess in what is called the *Vorstellung*, I rely upon in the *Begriff*. What they have *positively* in the feeling, or *positively* in the understanding, or *positively* in a union of both, I have reflectively, or ideally, or speculatively in reason. What the term *positive* amounts to will be best understood by a reference to other religions than our own. . . . Mormonism is a positive religion. There, says Joseph Smith, holding up the book of Mormon, take that, believe whatever it says, and do whatever it tells you. That is positive. . . . There is not a shadow of explanation, not a shadow of reasoning. . . . So it is with Mahomet and the Koran. . . . It is for the same reason that laws are positive. They rest on authority alone, another will than his who must obey them. . . . Nevertheless, it is implied in laws, and law, that *they* as particulars, and *it* as a whole,

were quite equivalent to them—just as no English word could quite convey all that is meant by the German *Aufklärung*. Perhaps, the Letter and the Spirit, the outer expression and the inner truth, might be said fairly to express the German words.

are as much the will of him, or them, who receive, as of him, or them, who give. *Law is but a realization of reason, of the reason common to us all*, as much yours as his, as much his as yours. So it is, or so it ought to be, with religion; and there you have the whole matter before you. He whose religion rests only on the *Vorstellung* possesses it *positively*—believes it positively only; whereas he with whom religion rests on the *Begriff*, has placed beneath it a philosophical basis."

At this point, it occurred to the lecturer that "possessing religion in the *Begriff*" might be construed to mean Rationalism—with which he was entirely out of sympathy. "Rationalism, in fact, means—in its religious application—nothing but Aufklärung"; and, as all who have read the foregoing pages must be well aware, Stirling was, in his day and generation, the declared foe of the Aufklärung. The Aufklärung, according to his opinion, had done its appointed work (for it *had* its appointed work to do) generations ago; and its day was over. Nevertheless, he was forced to see that, though "dead among thinkers," it had "descended upon the people."

"There is hardly a hamlet," he goes on, "but has its Tom Paines by the half-dozen—its Tom Paines of the tap, all emulously funny on the one subject. I witnessed such a thing as this myself last summer in the country—the bewildered defeat of my landlady under the crowing triumph of her son, a lad of seventeen or so, who had asked her to explain to him where Cain got his wife!"

The attitude of mind of this lad of seventeen—the attitude of mind which fixes on trivial "discrepancies" in the Scripture—was peculiarly repugnant to Stirling.

"With the Hebrew Scriptures lying there before us in their truth," he says, "is it not something pitiably small to hear again the jokes even of a Voltaire about the *discrepancies?* I do not apprehend that it is pretended by anyone that there are not discrepancies; but what are

they in the midst of all that grandeur? He who would boggle at the wife of Cain, or stumble over the walls of Jericho, is not an adult; he is but a boy still."

In several of his letters, the same thought is expressed, as, for instance, in the following passage from a letter to Mr Snaith, dated Nov. 15, 1897:—

"You are right about English thought for a long time now. I suppose it is the religious position that is to blame. The multitude—that part of it ever so little educated—sees nothing but the 'discrepancies,' a literal Garden of Eden, a literal Eve made from a literal rib of a literal Adam, and they fail to see aught else: they have ceased to read. It is still the Aufklärung with them, the naked disillusionment and exposure: *they cannot see the spirit for the letter:* they have not come to the Aufklärung No. 2, which tells them to reverse the position, and not to see the letter for the spirit. I acknowledge, however, that to teach and preach this is a vast practical difficulty. Hegel exclaimed publicly, 'I am a Lutheran, and will remain so.' My good friend, Prof. Veitch of the Logic Chair at Glasgow—(dead now, but he was really a friend)—I am told, used to hitch up his gown when he came to my name, and would say, 'Dr Stirling may tell you what he likes, but Hegel was nothing but an infidel!' Reproaches of that kind are practically fatal—however unjust!"

In another letter (dated Feb. 18, 1892) to the same correspondent, he writes:—

"I quite agree with you as to the colossal size of Hegel; and I agree with you also as to the Christian character of what he writes. It is, in fact—to my belief—that reputed character that, in these days, largely prevents the study of him . . . nothing will go down with many but the old, old Aufklärung still . . . they cannot believe a philosopher in earnest who will still stand by the Bible. They

ought to know, however, that the Aufklärung itself has been followed by its correction, and that it is now wholly out of date."

"I have no doubt," he observes in a later letter to the same correspondent, "I have no doubt all will change, however, as soon as what 'correction of the Aufklärung' means is seen and understood."

There is a more personal note in Stirling's letters on the same subject (religion) to Mr Hale-White, dated Nov. 24, 1881, and Nov. 20, 1882, respectively. In the first, he states his religious position with great definiteness, thus:—

"I hold my religious position to be essentially the same as what is called the Hegelian Right. . . . What we see now under the Mills, Buckles, Huxleys, *al.* is the continuation of the French Aufklärung in a very shallow form, and these men are supported now by the mass of the reading public. . . . The true position now is not to continue the Aufklärung, but to correct it by doing justice to Christianity, and by a deeper philosophy of the world.

"That is my position—philosophical Christianity—I have in the *Begriff* what the ordinary man has in the *Vorstellung*, and the historical facts are common to us both. From that position, I believe I could quite consistently occupy the pulpit; and it is as occupying that position that I am a communicant of the Established Church of Scotland."

In the second letter referred to, this sentence occurs: "Holding by philosophical Christianity from the Idealistic standpoint, I believe myself to belong to the orthodox evangelical party."

As we have already seen in connection with his articles on Strauss, Stirling had little sympathy with the Biblical critics.

"To me," he writes to Mr Snaith in Jan. 1898, "[there is] no idler thing under the sun than said Criticism. It is applicable at all ONLY *if* the books are ordinary ones; and even so, it is no use to me.

I take the Scripture wholly on the Testimony of the Spirit; and all that about dates and authors may, for me, go hang."

In this last quotation, it may be noticed, "Testimony of the Spirit" is used as equivalent to *Begriff*.

While opposed to scepticism, rationalism, and biblical criticism, Stirling was, at the same time, completely out of sympathy with a too narrow, *literal* orthodoxy. The following short extract from a letter to Mr Snaith, dated Nov. 22/98, seems pretty clearly to define his position between the two extremes of rationalism and a *literal* orthodoxy :—

"I do not think it is necessary for anyone in the pulpit to *mention* the 'discrepancies'—whether for defence or correction. The Dogmas are different: they are *constitutive*. But I do not think they should be *made down* to hearers. I once heard a preacher in Welsh on a collection Sunday telling his hearers to give as Christ gave—'He did not give His blood in teaspoonfuls—no, nor in teacupfuls; He gave in bucketfuls!' Now, it is quite true that we are purified by Christ's blood, for He died for His doctrine, and it is by that doctrine that we are Christians. Still I would not have this rationalism in the pulpit, if neither I would have that *literalism!* But might not a living, burning spiritualism be heard in the pulpit that, without interfering with any literalism, without even *naming* either discrepancy or dogma, would give the absolute soul of the latter? What an enormous quarry is the Bible, Old or New, for Spiritualism, whether in poetry or prose—the eloquence of prose!"

In a letter to Dr Ingleby, dated twenty years before the period we have now reached (July 5, 1870), Stirling gives a special illustration of the relative positions of the "common man" and the philosophical Christian.

"What is required," he writes, "is a few men by me . . . to bring men to see that Germany

(though almost unknown to itself) can give us principles true to fact—principles political, religious, and philosophical. *Nor is there the slightest desire that any man should commit mental suicide.* He may wonder at the miracle of the swine as much as Shakespeare has evidently done, and yet believe Christianity when properly philosophized. For instance, I would explain the Atonement thus: the common man feels his fallen nature—he yields to lazinesses, tempers, temptations of the flesh, lies, etc. He has a horror of meeting *that Judge after death.* He longs for a remedy . . . This [the remedy] to him is the *physical* blood [of Christ] . . . This is the *Idea*:—The Infinite *must manifest itself.* The manifestation must be by very nature—*finite*—imperfect—infected with an *original sin* that is in a certain way an injustice. What compensation can there be but that the Infinite should take on the form of the Finite, and suffer and atone so? Now, I preach this doctrine—and I preach in true Idea the *same thing precisely* that *he* (the common man) has in crass matter. I *meet* him, then—we are quite agreed—we have the same historical fact between us, the material side being turned to him, the ideal to me."

In a former chapter, when dealing with Stirling's article in the *Courant* on Ueberweg's Berkeley, it was pointed out that the author of the *Secret of Hegel*, unlike some later writers on Hegelianism, maintained that *personality* was implied in the God of Hegel. He (the God of Hegel) is the universal, the absolute, *self-consciousness*, "the living subject of the creative thought, and in Him it is that finite subjects live, and move, and have their being." In several of his private letters (especially, perhaps, in those to Mr Snaith) the same thought—of the personality of God—is repeated. The following quotations are from letters to Mr Snaith, written between 1897 and 1904:—

"God is *not* a mere logical universal to Hegel, but the living, personal God." "It is rather amusing to be told that I say my nightly prayers, as I always most devoutly do, to an unconscious God! To have no information about Hegel but the current periodicals is the stereotyped state of the case. I never expect ordinarily to see a single word on Hegel that is worth reading." "As to —— ——, I should like to tell him that *my* individualism is the individualism of the absolutely personal God, whom the Christ has vindicated into *concretion* from *abstraction* by the assumption of humanity. If —— ——'s individualism is not as mine, then I should say he has some reason to fear for the security of his Theism!" The last quotation is from a letter dated July 2/04: "I send for your reading," Stirling writes, "reprint of an article in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* . . . to see if you agree with me that what L. asserts of Hegel denying the personality of God as the Absolute should be resisted. I know I pray to God as the Personal Absolute, and surely I quote from Hegel's most authoritative works to a like effect in his case. Both you and I have all his [Hegel's] works, and I know no such possible denial as L. refers to."

With respect to the question of the immortality of the soul, Stirling writes to Mr Snaith thus:—

"The immortality of the soul as an individual subject scarcely admits of lengthened treatment. The one argument is simply the Divinity of the Universe. It is impossible that this world of ideas can be a thing of brainless chance, we know not how or why. It is the coevon of man; and the earth of his footing is alone inhabited in this externally huge universe—which *is* huge, and has so many atoms just because it is the externalization of Quantity as Quantity. All these stars, etc., Hegel declared, were no more to him than as 'a rash on the skin!'

"Now, all that being so, it is impossible that this — a mere broken fragment, broken in its first, broken in its last—can be all. There must come a mighty consummation!"

Of course, when he speaks of the "one argument" here, Stirling is leaving revelation out of sight. The allusion to Hegel and the "rash on the skin" was one very often heard on Stirling's lips. The meaning is that, to Hegel, mere externality—the mere more or less of matter—was a thing of no importance. To him, Spirit, Thought, was everything; and the external universe was interesting only in so far as, *in the laws which govern it*, it exhibited thought. As bearing on Stirling's view of the question of immortality, the following brief extract from the *Secret* is quoted here :—

"Absurd that you should be continued? Why so? On the contrary, it is no more absurd that you should be continued than that you *are*. That you *are* is the guarantee of your *necessity*. God is a concrete Spirit—not an abstract unit—why should not the death of the body be the birth of Spirit?—and why should not you *continue* united to the universal Spirit then, even as you are so united here, in Natural form, now?"

In reply to some question, on the part of Mr Hale-White, regarding the Resurrection, there occurs, in a letter dated Dec. 1881, the following passage :—

"Christianity ought *now* to be looked at ideally or philosophically. So looked at, the dogma of the Resurrection is essential to the Christian scheme as regards the immortality of the soul. It is not necessary, at the same time, to pin one's faith to the *letter*. A revelation, by the very terms of it, is *externalization*, and externalization is a prey to boundless contingency. Build a temple, of never so white marble, to God—how long will it be before rain and weather have stained it, before spiders,

rats, and mice have crept into it? Should you be apt to think the miracle of the swine such rat—why, for me, you might still be orthodox of the orthodox."

The statement categorically expressed in the first sentence of the above passage—that Christianity ought to be looked at "philosophically"—seems to demand an explanation and a reason, and we find both in the *Secret*. There, the writer, though admitting that "the humble, pious Christian who performs his probation of earth in full consciousness of the eye of Heaven," is "probably preferably situated to the greatest philosopher that ever lived," nevertheless states two reasons why religion is the better of the support of philosophy. One reason concerns "the humble pious Christian." Even he, it seems, though "independent of philosophy as regards his *faith*," might yet derive some gain from it (philosophy).

"In the singleness of his view, in the singleness of his endeavour, he who would be religious *merely* becomes narrow and thin and rigid. The warmth that should foster becomes with him the fire that shrivels; while the light, the mild light, that should guide, becomes restricted in his strait heart into the fierce flash that misleads. *Humanity wells from him;* he becomes a terror and an edge from which even his children flee. *To give the due breadth, then, to this too keen edge, it may have been that the Aufklärung, in the purposes of Providence, appeared;* and just such function does Philosophy possess for all, for the fierce in Faith as for the no less fierce in the so-called Reason still arrogated to themselves by the fragments of *the Illumination. Man must not rigidly restrict himself to a single duty, but must unclose himself into the largeness of his entire humanity.* It is good to know all things—the stars of heaven and the shells of earth, and not less the wondrous entities which Philosophy discloses in the bodiless region of thought as thought. The humble pious Christian, then, independent of Philosophy as regards his *faith*, may still profitably resort to the same for the *pasture of his humanity*."

But the chief reason why, in the present day, religion requires the support of philosophy, lies "in

the necessity of history"—in the fact that the Aufklärung has arisen.

"The Aufklärung cannot now be regarded as a temporary and accidental outbreak of infidelity principally French; it has now taken its place as a historical movement, and must now be acknowledged as a necessary member of the appointments of Providence. The French criticism, English criticism, German criticism, which belonged to that movement, cannot any longer be ignored; on the contrary, all the ascertained and approved results of these must be admitted into that common stock of the possessions of Humanity which is named Truth or Knowledge. But the position of revealed religion does not remain unmoved the while. For one thing, revealed religion must henceforth consent to place its documents on the ordinary and common basis of evidence, historical and other; and, indeed, it is precisely the nature of this evidence which renders desirable any appeal to philosophy . . . religion is not confined to the humble only; and never was there a time in the history of humanity when the proud heart longed more ardently than now to lay itself down in peace and trust within the sanctuary of religion, an offering to God. Now for these latter [those of proud heart] is it that religion—since the Aufklärung—must appeal to Philosophy. *And just to fulfil this function was it that Kant and Hegel specially came.* The former, breathing ever the sincerest reverence for Christianity, had no object during his long life but the demonstration to himself and others of the existence of God, the freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul. The latter [Hegel] followed in the same cause, and, in addition to the reconstruction of the truths of natural religion, sought to reconcile to philosophy Christianity itself. . . . Very obscure, certainly, in many respects is the system of Hegel, and in none, perhaps, obscurer than in how we are to conceive God as a subjective spirit, and man as a subjective spirit, and God and man as in mutual relation. Beyond all doubt, however, Hegel really attempts this, and believes himself to fulfil this. It is to be said, too, that the contradiction which is objected to the *thought of Hegel* may be equally objected to the *fact of the Universe.* Finite and Infinite, Conditioned and Absolute, both *are;* and of this *fact,* the dialectic of Hegel may be the true *thought.*"

CHAPTER XIX

1891-1900

George Cupples—Stirling's Friendship for him—*Darwinianism*—Criticism of Natural Selection—*What is Thought?*—The "Secret" *told out*

No sketch of the life of Stirling would be satisfactory, not to say complete, which did not give some account of his friendship with George Cupples, the author of *The Green Hand*, and one of the three men referred to in a previous chapter, who, during the years of the maturity and old age of the philosopher, stood closest to him. For forty-two years the two men were in constant touch with each other, either by letter, when they were living at some distance from each other, or, when the homes of both were in, or near, Edinburgh, by personal intercourse; and never was there a truer friendship than that which existed between them—never did any man possess a more loyal, devoted, enthusiastic admirer than Stirling found in Cupples.

To some who were young in the "eighties," the name Cupples calls up a singularly quaint, yet attractive, personality—a man absolutely unique, whose like we shall not probably see again. Dreamy, imaginative, unpractical to an incredible degree, Cupples was the very personification of the man of letters, but utterly devoid of the ambition, self-seeking, and worldly wisdom which generally characterize, more or less, the successful writers of these bustling days. Born, in 1822, in a manse in Stirlingshire, he had inherited from three generations of Scotch Church ministers—father, grandfather and great-grandfather—a religious spirit,

which dwelt in perennial and untroubled calm within the innermost sanctuary of his nature. Upon the altar of his heart the sacred fire burned ever with a steady, unflickering flame. Yet, although, in his youth, he had, at his father's request, attended theological classes to prepare him for entering the ministry, he, as Stirling puts it, "recoiled from the stairs of a Free Church pulpit." He never entered the clerical profession—or any other, unless, indeed, literature as he practised it could be called a profession.

At sixteen years of age he had gone to sea—perhaps allured by the visions of his imagination, perhaps driven by the severity of his father, whose religion seems to have been, not "the warmth that should foster," but "the fire that shrivels"—and for eighteen months, on a voyage to India and back, he served as a ship's boy.

"How intense the impression of that voyage must have been is evident from this that—at least to my surmise—it alone, this voyage, *with* his reading, underlies *The Green Hand*, and all the rest of his writings that concern the sea. I almost fancy that it (the voyage) had, in fact, a physical effect on him—that, so to speak, it physically knocked the breath out of him, and made him quiet and still in every expression, in every externality of life, afterwards. All at once, as it were, his brain teeming with romance, and in himself soft, simple, silent, smiling, only an all-expectant mother's boy—all at once, to be actually cuffed and kicked by a great rough, coarse monster, who kept brutally asking him, in the most blasphemous language, why he had not cleaned the grease from the brass candlestick better!"[1]

No doubt, his experiences during those eighteen months at sea affected permanently Cupples's character, as did also a serious illness (hip-joint disease) with which he was attacked about 1857, when he

[1] From the Biographical Sketch of Cupples by Stirling, which was appended to Cupples's *Scotch Deer-hounds and their Masters*, published in 1893—two years after its author's death.

was a man of thirty-four or thirty-five. Before that time he had already become a celebrity by the publication of *The Green Hand*, which had appeared as a serial in *Blackwood's Magazine* as early as 1848, when its author was only some twenty-six years of age, and is still regarded as among the best sea novels in the language; before that time, too (when he was only twenty-five), he had written the article on Emerson, which Stirling considered the best essay on Emerson ever written. After his illness it is doubtful whether he ever regained either the bodily health, the mental vigour, or the position as a writer, which he had enjoyed before it. He became, more or less, it must be admitted, a literary derelict. He was no less *literary* than before—he was as enthusiastic in his appreciation of excellence in any writing, as keen in detecting slovenliness, as ever (Stirling always regarded Cupples as an excellent literary critic), but perhaps his power of concentrated effort was diminished. The limp which his illness left with him (he was permanently lame, and wore a thick-soled boot) was perhaps to be seen in more than his walk; at any rate, one fancied that the *limpness*, discernible in him—both physical and moral—was the result of ill-health. As Stirling puts it, "he never was really, in the actual intellect, changed, though the wheels of it, perhaps, became somewhat more sluggish to turn."

In 1858, when he had not long risen from his sick bed, Cupples had married a young girl of nineteen, who, some years later, acquired a certain celebrity as a writer of stories for children.

In her own way, Mrs George Cupples was perhaps as unusual a character as her husband. Her courageous spirit, her humour, her love of adventure (for which she had a remarkable attraction!), her gipsy-like dislike of order, restraint, and regularity, her extraordinary power of throwing off

trouble and worry, were all, in a way, unique, and enabled her to go through what most women would have sunk under. On the other hand, it must be admitted that her lack of the more purely domestic qualities was only too visible in the state of her house; and it is a fact that she has been known to sally forth in the morning with the expressed intention of ordering in the provisions for the family dinner, and to return late in the evening in high spirits, and full of amusing talk about the people she had met, and the adventures which she had encountered in the course of the day, while the household had dined as best they could on the somewhat scanty contents of the larder.

To the friends who knew her best, and had not believed her to possess literary gifts, it was somewhat of a surprise when Mrs Cupples made her *début* as an authoress with the publication of a story of the sea for boys, entitled *The Little Captain*. How the appearance of the little book struck Stirling may be gathered from the following extract of a letter of his to Cupples, dated July 19, 1866:—

"You refer to the *Scotsman* hinting the author[1] to be someone, like yourself, knowing the sea, etc. That feeling is universal and ineradicable. I have tried your friends here with your own account, but they will not be persuaded. *Any* help is *all* help, they seem to think. It is so easy to deceive oneself, they say, as to the amount of help; human nature is weak, and believes what it wishes [to believe]—then morally the situation and relations are dangerous, and in many ways, for all concerned. . . . Really, Mrs Cupples deserving the credit, it is too bad—at the same time that I must frankly acknowledge my own weakness for the other side also! I think the best plan is for you to say nothing about it."

It is to the "eighties" that the present writer's

[1] From the context it is evident that the allusion is to a review in the *Scotsman* of *The Little Captain*.

recollections of George Cupples belong. About 1881 it probably was that the Cupples family removed from Guardbridge, near St Andrews, where they had lived for several years, to a house on the north side of Edinburgh, quite near Stirling's. In the same neighbourhood, though not in the same house, George Cupples spent the last ten years of his harmless, yet apparently useless, busy yet resultless, dreamily-contented life, taking no more "thought for the morrow" than the daisies and the dandelions (there were probably no "lilies" there) that lifted their innocent, unabashed faces from green, and borders, and walks in his rough, disorderly garden.

If it was rough and disorderly, however, the garden was not neglected, for Cupples, it must be recorded to his credit, dug, and sowed and planted to such purpose that his peas, potatoes and parsley were unusually good; but it was characteristic of him to prefer the rank luxuriance of nature to the stiff regularity of horticultural art. As Stirling puts it, "it was the novelist in him that largely led to this." "I do like a footpath!" he would exclaim, looking "with shining eyes" at a beaten track—to most men, an unsightly object—which led across what ought to have been a lawn in his garden.

Contented in a simple, child-like way at all times, he was blissfully happy in the society of the friend for whom he had such a warm affection, whom he so humbly and intensely admired; and one is tempted to think that he actually *lived* from one to another of the alternate Monday evenings on which he was in the habit of going to smoke a pipe with Stirling after dinner. Over the pipes there would be talk of philosophy, literature, and philology (in his later years, Cupples devoted a great part of his time to the study of philology and ethnology—especially Keltic), Stirling generally doing the most of the talking, while Cupples listened with rapt

attention, now and then throwing in a word—almost invariably a word of enthusiastic approbation—in his soft, sleepy voice. "On all the great interests of humanity," Stirling writes, "our sympathies were in common"; and he concludes a paragraph about Cupples's favourite poets with this sentence:—

"He knew Chaucer well, Spenser too; but Milton, when there was mutual talk of him, we were both equally ready to rave about, as the deepest, truest, greatest of all pure poets—quoting, big-mouthed, at times the 'Hymn on the Nativity,' say, or some grand bit of the all too few grand, grand sonnets."

Perhaps it was characteristic of Cupples's impersonal, unegotistic outlook on life that, for probably two years before the end, he was deeply troubled and anxious about the health of his wife, who was discovered to have some affection of the heart, while he himself—all unknown to himself, or to anyone else—was much more advanced in a similar disease. It was not till the appearance of the swelling, which announced the approach of the end, that his malady was discovered, while Mrs Cupples was able, some time after his death, to join her sisters in New Zealand, where she lived for several years.

The death of Cupples was a great grief to Stirling. "Sadly I lament his loss," are the words with which he concludes his biographical sketch of his old friend; "how much he was to me it is I only, daily, that know." Just before this sentence there occurs the following brief description, which seems vividly to call up Cupples:—

"Would, as when we had planned some excursion—would that, by going up the street, I could see again his tall, showy figure coming eagerly towards me, broad slouch hat on head, cloak flying open, stick flourishing, huge high-soled, high-heeled boot stumping, face beaming—gratified, alert, with the thought of the expedition on hand."

Already, when he wrote the above words in his seventy-fourth year, Stirling had more than begun to experience one of the saddest aspects of advancing age—the loss, one by one, of those who began life with us, or even after us. Of those friends of Stirling's mentioned in the previous chapters, Ingleby had already gone, and Roden Noel was soon to follow. Of his intimates, there still, however, remained Laurie and Dr Mitchell; and among the men of whom he saw a good deal during the "nineties" there were two who ought to be mentioned here. The one was the Rev. William Hastie, Professor of Theology in Glasgow University—a man of powerful intellect and wide reading, who died with startling suddenness in 1903. The other was R. J. Muir, H.M. Inspector of Schools, and author of *Panta Rye*, *Muncraig*, etc. —a kind-hearted man, and somewhat erratic genius, with a brain teeming with quotations from every variety of writer—from *Hans Breitmann* to Hegel!

It was about two years after Cupples's death that Stirling had the misfortune, a second time, to break an arm. He had walked to Leith—a distance of about two miles—on a frosty, winter day, and, as his habit was, was passing along the streets, lost in thought, and seeing nothing about him, when the sudden barking of a dog close at his heels startled him out of his reverie, and threw him off his balance (which, in his seventy-fourth year, had begun to be somewhat unsteady). He slipped, and fell on the hard pavement, breaking his left arm below the elbow. It was characteristic of the man —of his unyielding spirit and his indomitable will— that, as soon as he was helped on to his feet, instead of driving home, or to a doctor, he continued his walk, transacted the little piece of business on which he had come out, and then returned home on foot! Arrived at the house, he let himself in with his key, walked upstairs, and entering the

drawing-room where a daughter was sitting, said in a quiet, matter-of-fact tone, "Come and help me off with my coat—I have broken my arm."

At the time of the accident, Stirling had just completed his *Darwinianism: Workmen and Work*, which was published in the beginning of 1894. The publication of the book reawakened his regret for the loss of his friend Cupples, for the subject of it was one which Cupples could have discussed with interest and intelligence. He (Cupples) had corresponded with Darwin, and had furnished him with information gained from his experience in the breeding of deer-hounds; but, as Stirling says in the biographical sketch mentioned above, "there was no man more opposed to the *theoretical conclusions* of Darwin than George Cupples was."

Although *Darwinianism* was the first book which Stirling had devoted exclusively to the subject, in several of his previous works—in the *Secret*, in *As regards Protoplasm*, and more particularly in the Gifford Lectures—he had dealt to some extent with Darwin's theory of Natural Selection, and in several of his private letters there occur allusions to it which show that the subject had occupied a considerable amount of his thought long before 1894.

The earliest reference in any of his works to Darwin occurs in the *Secret*, where he quotes from Hegel, on the subject of evolution, to the following effect:—

> "Nature is to be regarded as a *System of Grades*, of which the one necessarily rises out of the other, and is the proximate truth of the one from which it results—but not so that the one were *naturally generated* out of the other, but only in the inner Idea which constitutes the Ground of Nature. . . . It has been an inept conception of earlier and later *Naturphilosophie* to regard the progression and transition of one natural form and sphere into a higher as an *outwardly actual production*, which, however, to be made *clearer*, is relegated into the *obscurity* of the past."

On this paragraph Stirling comments: "This, written many years before Mr Darwin's book, reads like a critique on nothing else." A little further on, he adds this paragraph :—

"The error, then, of the reasoners in question [*i.e.*, the 'Darwinists'] is patent. . . . Not only is it *utterly impossible for any material principle to be an adequate Beginning*, an adequate First and One, but the whole problem they set themselves concerns at bottom abstract Quality, abstract Quantity, abstract Identity, abstract Difference, abstract Condition, and, in general, the whole body of Metaphysic, with which—though they know it not themselves—unexamined, simply presupposed, they set to manipulate their atom or their species, as if *so* any legitimate result *could* be possible."

"The question of evolution and the descent of man, etc.," he writes to Dr Ingleby on March 5, 1882, "is philosophy and not natural history;" and a few weeks later, in a letter to the same correspondent, "the questions of the origin of species and the descent of man are emphatically philosophical and not natural-historical."

"I told them in Glasgow," occurs in a third letter to Ingleby about the same time, "that it [the *Descent of Man*] was Darwin's explanation of how the Particular *grew* into the Universal, and the most pitiable book I knew."

In the first of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Law*, this reference to the Darwinian theory of evolution occurs :—

"To suppose that there ever was a natural first germ that *naturally grew* into another, as, for example, that the oyster ever *grew* into a man, is to suppose an absurdity. . . . All that ingenuity that would explain the peacock's tail by the loves of the female (whose comparative plainness then remains unaccountable) is but perverse and a waste of time—a waste of time in this, too, that science is quite unable to allow the explanation *time enough*. . . . The method of *natural conjecture*, in fact, however amusing, leads nowhere."

The words "natural conjecture" in the above extract indicate what is the strongest objection to the entire position of Darwin—that it rests upon nothing more solid than unverified, unreasoned conjecture. To summarize, as far as it is possible to do so within the present limits, the arguments advanced by Stirling against the Darwinian theory of evolution, they may be said to be chiefly the following:—Firstly, the one indicated in the extracts given above from the *Secret* and from Stirling's letters—namely, that the question of *origin* is one for philosophy and not for natural history, and that those natural historians who attempt to deal with it, take for granted, without investigation or examination, the very points which most stand in need of explanation. Secondly, Stirling shows, in his *Darwinianism*, that Darwin often accepted the facts on which he founded his theories on somewhat doubtful authority, citing in particular the case of one Hearne, "the hunter."

"Who was he, Hearne?—who was that Hearne, the sole and single man privileged to see 'the first step by which conversion of a bear into a whale would be easy, would offer no difficulty?' 'In North America the black bear was seen by Hearne swimming for hours with widely open mouth, thus catching, almost like a whale, insects in the water!'"[1]

The sentences quoted by Stirling in this passage are from Darwin's *Origin of Species*. One cannot help wondering, as one reads them, whether it is from such evidence as that indicated there that science usually derives her *undoubted and indubitable facts*. It was in 1796, it seems, that Hearne observed the phenomenon of the swimming, open-mouthed bear, on which Darwin founds so much; and Stirling remarks humorously, "That is almost a hundred years ago; surely, by this time, the bear will have got flippers, or at least the *bulbs* of them!"

[1] *Darwinianism*, p. 155.

Thirdly, as Stirling points out, in the *Origin of Species*, no *origin* of any species is ever demonstrated, but only at most *modification*.

"This is strange, too—in the whole *Origin of Species* there is not a single word of origin! . . . Nay, as no breeder ever yet made a new species, or even a permanent race, so the Darwins themselves, both Charles and his son, Mr Francis, confess: 'We cannot prove that a single species has changed.'" [1]

Yet it was the claim to have discovered and demonstrated the *origin* of species which made Darwin's reputation.

"In the books of the day—novels, say—we are accustomed to come again and again on 'Darwin.' And 'Darwin' is something mystic—a prodigious knowledge and power, that, in absolute intelligence of all things, has deposed the Deity. . . . The knowledge, as knowledge, then, was it so prodigious? It was only the word *origin* did all this; and the word *origin*, strictly, was a misnomer, misleading, not novelists alone, but the general public as such, into anticipations of a beginning and a first that was to be, as it were, a new creation of all things: whereas Mr Darwin himself exclaims, 'It is mere rubbish thinking at present of the origin of life!'"

But it is against "the central idea, the quintessence of Darwinism," that the main strength of Stirling's argument is directed. This central idea—the so-called "law" of Natural Selection—is that new species arise from the gradual "accumulation of individual differences." By some accident or chance, which Darwin does not undertake to explain, a bird, for example, is "born with a beak $\frac{1}{100}$th of an inch longer than usual." This additional length of beak gives the creature some advantage over the others of its own kind; in the Struggle for Existence it survives them, and propagates offspring, which possess the parental advantage (the elongated beak) in a higher degree,

[1] *Darwinianism*, p. 257.

while their offspring, again, exhibit it in a still higher, and so on until a new species emerges.

This, then, Stirling says in effect, if not in actual words — this, then, is science — scientific reasoning! This mere guess-work, this conjecture, unsupported—even actually contradicted—by facts! It is *not true* that "differences" do go on "accumulating."

"Individual does differ from individual; no two individuals are perfectly alike. Manifestly, then, there is development of difference. . . . But is it so certain, as Mr Darwin will have it, that *difference goes on*—that difference adds to itself—*till* there emerges—what?—its own opposite, an identity, a fixed new identity that actually propagates its own identity, as a species, before our eyes, illimitably? . . . *If* there is *advance* of difference into a *new*, is there not *return* of difference into the *old*, identity? We can see the latter [*i.e.*, *reversion* to the original type] at every minute of the day, and on all sides of us; but we never see the former—never have seen the former. . . . A breeder, if he is to breed, must have his material to work on; he knows that to effect the modifications he wants, he can only take advantage of *what is already there*. Nay, it is not by the accumulation of *differences* that the breeder effects his purposes, but by the accumulation of *identities*. If he wants wool, he adds wool to wool; if he wants flesh, he adds flesh to flesh. . . . But with all his skills, and all his contrivances, and all his perseverances, no breeder has ever yet produced *a new species*. We do not deny, any more than Kant, that nature *can* produce new species; we only deny that nature has no secret for the process *but* the accumulation of the differences of accident."[1]

It is in his *As regards Protoplasm* that Stirling observes that, "in the fact of 'reversion' or 'atavism,' Mr Darwin acknowledges his own failure." Each example of reversion of the individual to the original type (and the examples are numerous) is a proof that "differences" do *not* go on "accumulating," and so a disproof of Darwin's "law" of Natural Selection. That such unsub-

[1] *Philosophy and Theology*, pp. 398-399.

stantiated conjecture as this of natural selection should be elevated to the dignity of a law by the common consent of scientific men, is surely one of the strangest signs of the times. As Stirling remarks in the *Protoplasm*, "People will wonder at all this by-and-by."

As was pointed out in a previous chapter, a law of nature is an *invariable uniformity* observed among a certain class of otherwise divergent individuals. The law of gravitation, for instance, is exhibited by *all* material bodies, however unlike or divergent in other respects. In its operation it is *invariable*, *demonstrable*, and capable of expression in a *definite arithmetical formula*. Within the experience of man, no physical body has ever been known to disobey it. But is this so-called "law" of Natural Selection in the same position, on the same level, as gravitation? Can it justly claim to be called a law at all? As we have seen, it is *not invariable* (for each case of reversion is a breach of the law), neither is it *demonstrable*—within the experience even of humanity! — for Darwin admits that "we cannot prove that a single species has changed." As for expression in a definite arithmetical formula, that is obviously entirely out of the question, since Natural Selection rests entirely on *chance*—a chance variation from the specific type—and chance, accident, is incapable of being formulated. Any thoughtful person, who considers the shallowness of conjecture that calls itself science here, will sympathize with Stirling when, in 1871, he wrote to Dr Ingleby, lamenting, *à propos* of the *Descent of Man*, which had just been published, the materialism, the want of thought, which characterized the time. He added, however, that the book would be "a great help towards return to thought. It is a peculiarity of the mad to tear off their clothes, and contort their nakedness. We need not be alarmed: *the keepers will come.*"

It is pleasant to be able to point out that, even among the ranks of the most distinguished scientific men, Stirling had supporters in his view of the incompetence of the Darwinian theory of evolution as an explanation of the order in the universe. In the *Life of Lord Kelvin*, by Professor Silvanus Thompson, we are told that, on one occasion, when Mrs King (Lord Kelvin's sister) had been reading "from Darwin's works"

> "the passage in which he expresses his disbelief in Divine revelation and in any evidence of Design, he [Kelvin] pronounced such views utterly *unscientific*, and vehemently maintained that our power of discussing and speculating about atheism and materialism was enough to disprove them. Evolution, he declared, *would not in the least degree explain the great mystery of nature and creation.* If all things originated in a single germ, then that germ contained in it all the marvels of creation—physical, intellectual, and spiritual—to be afterwards developed. *It was impossible that atoms of dead matter should come together so as to make life.*"[1]

There is a great deal that is apposite to this question—a great deal that one is tempted to quote—all through Stirling's works, perhaps especially in the *Secret* towards the end of the "Conclusion"; but the present limits of space forbid further quotation on the subject.

As far as Stirling's personal life was concerned, the "nineties" were not eventful. After the publication of the book on Darwin, the event of most importance was the appearance, in 1897, by arrangement with Messrs Oliver & Boyd, of a second edition of the *Secret*, with some alterations and additions by the author.

Three years later (in 1900) his last important work, *What is Thought?* appeared. There is no doubt that, in its author's opinion, this book, with the *Categories* (which, published three years

[1] The italics are ours.

later, may be regarded as an appendix to the other), formed the coping-stone of his life's work. Writing to Mr Hale-White in 1886, when the worries and anxieties attendant on a law-suit were preventing him from doing any philosophical work, he remarks: "I feel now as if the chances were that I should never get delivered of my own special wind-up and best!" And similar remarks occur elsewhere in his private letters. Now, in 1886, all his works, save the *Darwinianism* and *What is Thought?* had already appeared, so it is natural to conclude (*Darwinianism* being concerned, so to speak, with a side issue) that *What is Thought?* contained what Stirling regarded as his "own special wind-up and best."

This conclusion is confirmed by the opinion of several philosophical writers and teachers at the time when the book was published. The following extracts from three of the many letters received by Stirling early in 1900 will perhaps serve by way of example. The first is from a letter from Professor Campbell Fraser, dated Feb. 15, 1900:—

"A book in which every page expresses years of thought cannot be adequately estimated within a few days, but I have already read enough in it [*i.e.*, *What is Thought?*] to be conscious of its highly stimulating influence on what is best in man, and to see that this, your latest work, is of a piece with preceding work, which has given you so high a place in the intellectual and moral history of Scotland."

The second occurs in a letter from Professor Laurie, dated Feb. 6, 1900:—

"I have read it [*What is Thought?*] with the keenest pleasure. For acute and penetrating criticism it is almost superhuman. Nor do I think there is much more to be said on Kant's failure and Hegel's position. As to this latter [Hegel] there can be no doubt that his

central thought is put beyond question by you."

The following, from a letter from Professor Seth Pringle-Pattison, dated Jan. 1st, 1900, seems precisely to express what was Stirling's intention in his latest work :—

"There is all the tang of the *Secret* in the new volume, and it is not a little remarkable that 35 years should separate the two. May we not say, indeed, that this is *The* Secret, or at least the Secret *told out?* This, as I understand the book, is the final clearing up of the mystery, the stripping off of the last veil that has hitherto obscured and distorted the view of Hegel."

So far as is possible in a book such as the present (which is professedly *ex*oteric—intended more especially for the *un*initiated), we shall endeavour to see what is meant by the "telling out" of the "secret," the "stripping off of the last veil." It may be remembered that, in the foregoing pages, it has been frequently stated that, according to Hegel and Stirling, *thought* is the basis of the universe, the necessary *Prius*, or First, of creation. The principles of thought, it has been said, "are not the *property* of man—they are not merely in *him*—they are the basis and framework of the entire universe." It has been pointed out, too, that since, in the world of man, we know that the thought, or conception, always *precedes* the expression or execution, it is only reasonable to conclude that this was so also in the universe—that *thought* (the thought of God) preceded the physical universe. Perhaps it may be permitted, as bearing on the point under discussion, to quote again this brief sentence from the *Secret* :—

"Here lies the germ of Hegel that initiated his whole system. The universe is but a materialization, but an externalization, but a heterization of certain thoughts:

these may be named, these thoughts *are*, the thoughts of God. To take it so, God has *made* the world on those thoughts. In them, then, we know the thoughts of God, and, so far, God Himself."

Having thus, in his previous works, laid it down that the universe is built on *thought*—that thought is the basis of all things—it was only natural that Stirling's last work should be an attempt to answer the question, What *is* Thought?

To put the matter in another way, it has been indicated frequently in the previous pages that the special business of the philosopher is the search for *an ultimate principle*—a principle which is the final explanation of all other principles. It has been said, too, with respect to Hegel, that his special work was to find a first principle out of which the others—the "categories," which he had inherited from his philosophical progenitor, Kant—could be seen to *grow*. Such principle must be a *living* principle, capable of development, through its own spontaneous movement, into the universe as we know it. No mere germ of matter could be such a principle. A material germ would, of itself, remain inert, self-identical, being incapable of expansion, of development, but only of accretion or diminution. Moreover, the first principle must be no mere imaginary abstraction, but an *actual fact*, something which actually *is*. The current belief with respect to philosophy, as Stirling points out in *What is Thought?* is that it deals with empty abstractions, whereas Science is based on facts.

"And so, one may have been apt to speculate in the past, were philosophy seen to grow from a *Fact*, to develop a *Fact*—a single principle—a single principle *in rerum natura*, that would give intelligibleness, certainty, and security to every further progress . . . would it [philosophy] not be generally seen into at last, and would it not receive at last that confidence on the part of the bulk of mankind which is at present denied it, and which so far is reserved for science alone?"

Is there any such principle—a principle which is a *fact*, an undeniable fact, which is *living*, and which is capable, through its own movement, of development *out* of itself into something different from itself—which has within it the power of transition *from identity to difference?* Hegel and Stirling reply, There *is*.

Now, what is that principle? To give the reply, it is necessary to refer again to what has been said above—that the universe is built on *thought;* that the *framework* of the universe—what Stirling calls the "diamond net"—is composed of principles of thought, *categories*, which it is the special business of mankind to endeavour to reach, to formulate, to make explicit. That this is so is implied in the very existence of science—any science whatever. Every attempt of science to *explain* any group of phenomena *presupposes that the facts are explicable*, and that means that they exhibit some *principle* which is capable of being formulated—that they are the expression of thought. And that brings us back to the question, What *is* Thought?

The answer is, Thought is the special function of *self-consciousness*. Out of Self-consciousness—not the empirical self-consciousness of each individual man, but the absolute, the divine Self-consciousness, through its own native, spontaneous movement — the categories can be shown to develop. As Stirling puts it in a letter to Mr Snaith, written in Jan. 1904: "The Ego [or self-consciousness], God's Ego," is, "by its own divine dialectic [*i.e.*, rhythm, movement], the *divine* origin and original of the divine Categories, which also, by the same dialectic externalized, are the Creation —God's own divine Creation." "If you look at the universe," he adds, "you will see that it is in effect (ideally, internally) but a bundle of Categories."

Self-consciousness, then, the Ego, is, according to Stirling, *the principle*—the Hegelian principle, though perhaps not quite explicit in Hegel's own writings. It is a *fact*—an undeniable fact—the most undeniable fact known to us. Descartes, beginning with the determination to get rid of all presupposition—to doubt everything which it was possible to doubt—found that the one fact incapable of being doubted was his own existence. The very fact that he doubted, proved that he *was*. *Cogito ergo sum* was the foundation of his philosophy. The whole external universe—the hills, the sea, the heavens — might conceivably be a vision, a dream, of my own ; but that I *am*—I who feel, and see, and think—is to me the most undeniable of facts.

If self-consciousness is a *fact*, it is also living, and it is capable, through its own inner movement, of development out of itself into its "other"—into something different from itself. To quote here from what is perhaps the most explicit—certainly the *fullest* and most condensed — of all Stirling's writings on Hegel, namely, the first of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Law* (quoted at some length by himself in *What is Thought?*)—

"Hegel said to himself, or seems to have said to himself, for there is little that is direct in Hegel—he builds his system as a man might build a house, and lets us find out all his thoughts about it for ourselves—I, too, like other philosophers, would like to explain existence ; but what does that mean? Evidently, I must find a single principle, a single fact *in* existence, that is adequate to all the phenomena *of* existence, to all the *variety* of existence ; and this principle, while adequate to all the variety of existence, while competent to reduce into its own *identity* all the *difference* that is, must bring with it its own reason for its own self, its own necessity, its proof that it is, and it alone is, that which could not *not* be . . . he [Hegel] would find an explanation of all that is in some *actual constituent* of all that is. And that is thought, reason ; that is *self-*

consciousness. Self-consciousness he finds to be the one aim of existence: all that is, he finds, *is only for self-consciousness.* That is the one purpose of existence. Nature itself is but a gradual and graduated rise up from the dust of the field to the self-consciousness of man. This we can see for ourselves: in the inorganic scale, up and up to the organic, and, in this latter, up and up to man. All is *explained* only when it is converted into thought, only when it is converted into ourselves, only when it is converted into self-consciousness. . . . It [self-consciousness] is the ultimate and essential drop of the universe, and explanation is only the reduction of all things into it. All things, indeed, stretch hands to it, rise in successive circles ever nearer and nearer to it. Now what is self-consciousness? Its constitutive movement is the idealization of a *particular* through a *universal* into a *singular.* Now that may appear a very hard saying, but it is a very simple one in reality: it is only a general naming of the general act of self-consciousness. In every act of self-consciousness, that is, there is an object and a subject [the thing known, and the person who knows]. The object, on its side, is a material externality of parts, while the subject, on the other side again, is an intellectual unity, but a unity that has within it, or behind it, a whole world of thoughts. It is by these thoughts the subject would master the object, *reduce it into itself.* . . . We can only think by *generalizing*, and generalizing is the reduction of particulars to universals. Evidently, then, in every act of self-consciousness, *particulars* meet *universals* in a *singular.* . . . Now, that is the Notion—that is the Secret of Hegel. *The vital act of self-consciousness is the notion.* The single word *notio* involves all the three elements, a *knowing* (universal) of *something* (particular) in a *knower* (singular)."

Here, in the above passage, the "Secret" is undoubtedly "told"—even, one might say, "*told out*" —and there are several passages in the *Secret of Hegel* (some of them quoted in *What is Thought?*) in which it is stated with equal explicitness. Nevertheless, the reader who studies Stirling's last book will find it (the secret) treated much more fully and explicitly than in any of his previous works. In the following letter to Mr Hale-White, too (for the insertion of which here apologies are perhaps due to

the uninitiated reader, for whom this book is said to be specially intended), the "secret" is told with great directness and all possible simplicity. The letter is dated December 1874:—

"There are only two things," Stirling writes, "that actually *exist*—Nature and Spirit. Or there is only one thing that exists—Spirit (implying Nature). Thought is that which cannot *not* be. There must be a primal necessity. That is *thought*, and the *existence* that necessarily results as the *expression* (manifestation) of thought. The Begriff, then, is the one necessity, but the Begriff is the Ego, Self-consciousness. Ego is the primal ἀνάγκη, and *its* necessity again is a *non*-ego (a manifested *nature*—its own). There *is* existence; therefore there is something that could not *not* be—and that, named above, may be also named an *internalè* that could not be without an *externalè*—a subject-object. An internalè, a subject, were a blank and null without an internalè that reflected it into the unity of a meaning, of a purpose for its own self. *Hegel does not state those things, but they must be got at to understand him.*[1]

"Now, about 'concrete.' Well, Nature and Spirit being alone what *exists*, Logic, the whole series of the categories, must be called abstract—it does not, in its own form, *exist*[2]—it gets *existence* as an unconscious permeating, supporting, constituting diamond net, outwardly, in Nature, also as an unconscious system of weights and measures, so to speak, inwardly, in every individual spirit, and as a *conscious system* (of logic, of categories) in the *Hegelianly educated spirit*. Thus relatively abstract, it is very certainly, all the same, *absolutely* concrete—it is *the* important, the *essential*, the *substantial*, element or filling of all things. So with *each* category: *Becoming* is the most general predicate by which you can characterize *that which is;* the last word you can say is,—What is, is Process. Sea becomes land, land sea; metals become oxydes; wood, stone, falls into dust; plants, animals, are born, grow, die, rot,

[1] The italics here are ours.

[2] Like other philosophers, from Plato onwards, Stirling distinguishes between *being* and *existence*. Existence applies to the *phenomenal*, the external, *that which is perceived* through the senses; being applies to the *noumenal*, the internal. Nature *exists;* God *is;* man, in so far as he is spirit, *is* (he is "made in the likeness of God"), in so far as he consists of an external body, *exists*.

etc. What is—what at any moment is—is *re*-formation. Well, re-formation, process, becoming, is certainly always from Being to Being. Still, you understand what process is, quite by itself, without reference to any Being whatever. Well, its accurate definition *in that form* [*i.e.*, the definition of Becoming] is negation and affirmation (nothing and being), both together, in union, neither without the other. It is an amalgam, then, and it is *in rerum natura* (it is the inward scheme—action—in a thousand natural facts). As such actually existent amalgam (Begriff), it is concrete—though, *in that form*, certainly 'in the abstract element of thought.' But its *moments* are *absolutely* abstract; neither *is* (or *exists*) by itself: you cannot hold up, make overt, make explicit, negation (nothing) without holding down, making occult, making implicit, affirmation (Being). That is the case in the perfectly generalized notion of becoming (process), and that is the case in every actual instance of becoming. But *Something* is a better example. If, in Becoming, the two moments seem to a certain extent apart, as if the process were *between* them (which is not the case, however), in *Something* each penetrates and permeates the other to the formation of a quasi-permanent third something—*Something*. It is as if cold and vapour were precipitated together into snow. Fancy sulphuric acid here, and soda there—let them slip together, they are at once Glauber's Salts [*i.e.*, Johann Rudolf Glauber's]—a one—which one you can (in idea) see at any moment separating into two. Viewed as moments, sulphuric acid and soda—acid (the negative, *nothing*), and alkali (the positive, *being*)—*exist*, each in its own form apart. But that is not so with the moments Being and Nothing, neither as they are in Becoming, nor as they are in Something. Each something in existence *is what it is as much by what it is not as by what it is;* and you can never show Being and Nothing apart, each in its own form. . . . Being and Nothing are the *abstract moments* which their coalescence goes to form, and which are actual functioning schemata of all *existing* things.

"Take Quantity: its moments are Discretion and Continuity. They are abstract, but *it* is concrete. *It* is *their* concretion, and *it* is *in rerum natura*, but *they* (singly) are not. You can never show a discrete that is not continuous, or a continuum that is not discrete. Discretion, then, is the acid (but abstractly), the negative, the nothing, that goes together with the alkali, the positive, the being, to form the one concrete notion (though in that form—the

form of abstract thought—relatively abstract) Quantity. Quantity is then a Begriff, and an analogue of *the* Begriff —the Ego, Self-consciousness, which also, in its place, is an *amalgam*, a concrete, of two—the Subject and the Object, the internalè and the externalè—and those moments Hegel would not hesitate to call, in reference to the resultant single Ego, or Absolute Spirit, *relatively* abstract.

"No, there is nothing 'historic' in it. The Idea at once *is*, and the Universe at once is, in the virtue of the Idea. But that is no reason why you may not take the watch to pieces. Creation must not be supposed an event in time. The Absolute Self-consciousness is *What is*, and the Absolute Self-consciousness involves an Absolute object (its *nature*, and so what we call Nature). God, then, is not up there, a big man in the air, to be discovered by a telescope.[1] He exists in me, in you, in him, etc. In each of us, as a mathematical point, is the whole infinite *radiation*.

"Where does this 'pen,' this 'paper' come in? Nature is the necessary externalè—the 2nd moment of the notion (the particular)—and the 'pen' and 'paper' belong to it; and *it, simply as being an* EXTERNALÈ, is a boundless out and out of difference amid ceaseless contingency. The notions of Logic are never intended to be such that you will deduce from them *this* 'pen' or *that* 'paper'—Nature as a whole is there, and *must* be there, as 2nd moment of the Notion. The things in Nature are not deduced from the Notion, but they are reduced to the Notion by its (Nature's) own action. Nature's 'Mechanik' rises into 'Physik,' that into 'Organik.' The last of 'Organik' itself is Life and Man, out of whom there is at last the birth of Spirit, which is the return of the Notion from externalness, from Nature, to its own form, its own inwardness. . . .

"'Being to Being,' yes, but *that* is negation—what comes *was* not, what goes *is* not."

The letter concludes abruptly, at the foot of the second sheet of paper, with the words, "*Must* stop *some*time!" These three last words express the only excuse which can be offered for what is felt to be a most scanty and insufficient statement of the

[1] The reference is to a saying of the astronomer Lalande (quoted in the Preface to the *Secret*), "I have swept space with my telescope, and found no God."

character and contents of *What is Thought?*—a book which throws much new light on the four great German philosophers — Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel—and their relations to each other, and which, moreover, contains its author's *last word.* Here, in brief, is his summary :—

"Explanation of the universe" is "the aim of philosophy." "Science, no doubt, has also attempted the problem, but always only with such presuppositions [*e.g.*, Space, Time, Matter] as to negate the enterprise. . . . The ancients tried their best with *thickenings* and *thinnings;* the moderns have scarcely done more with *eddyings* and *swirlings*, *heatings* and *coolings*. . . . Metaphysicians, with a similar purpose, may not have done perfectly, or even well; but have they not done better? They *have* a First, a First that is *in rerum natura*, and so constituted also that, by virtue of its own *ratio*, it develops into an entire *internalè*, which, in turn, and by virtue of the same *ratio* continued is an entire *externalè*. . . . We cannot further follow here a Philosophy of Nature in the *Particular* and the *Singular.*

"But God, we say at once, is, necessarily to us, alone in all this, the actually, livingly, and personally *bëent*[1] UNIVERSAL.

"For to philosophize through the Ego is not to presume to measure the infinitude of God. . . .

"There can no Supreme Being be but that must say to Himself *I:* I AM THAT I AM. . . .

"Man, again, it is said, is made 'after the likeness' of God: 'a man is the image and glory of God.'

"It is the very heart of the Christian Religion that the Infinite God, become Finite, is a Man.

"And man is *I.* Even by the privilege of having been made like unto God, Man is *I.*

"It is that that he has of God in him. . . .

"Hegel . . . lived—indeed we may say it—*in* God and *to* God.

"I Am that I Am—I Am that I Am—I Am that I Am.

"That to Hegel was all."

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[1] *See* note on p. 346 as to distinction of *being* and *existence.*

CHAPTER XX

1901-1909

Last Years—Death of Mrs Stirling—*The Categories*—Professor Laurie—Stirling's Friendship for him—His Death—Stirling's Death—Tributes to his Memory

WHAT remains to be told of Stirling's life is mostly sad—as we count sadness in this world. Perhaps in another and a better world, the breaking of the links that bind us to this earth will be regarded, not as a thing to grieve at, but rather to rejoice over, as the prisoner rejoices at the loosing of his chains. Before his own hold on life was loosed, Stirling had to experience, in those last years, the breaking of two more links with it—one of them the strongest of all. It was in 1903 that the sharer of his joys and sorrows for more than fifty years—the only love of his life—was taken from him.

Before that terrible wrench occurred, however, one or two small events, which took place in the first years of the century, have to be recorded. In 1901, on the occasion of the ninth jubilee of the University of Glasgow, the Senatus of his *alma mater* conferred on Stirling the honorary degree of LL.D. As he was now nearing the completion of his eighty-first year, and, as the result of his accident in 1893, was apt to be somewhat nervously distrustful of his footing, he shrank from making his appearance in a large crowded hall, and the Senatus kindly agreed that the degree should be conferred on him *in absentia*.

About the same time, or a little earlier, a friend sent him from Paris an extract from a French

, May 25, 1901.

Dear Professor Campbell Fraser,

I beg to tender you my best thanks for this most valuable gift of your new Berkeley. I shall be glad to profit by the new & again instruct myself by the old. It is a pleasure indeed to see that innocently arch lip & those sincere smiling eyes as one only opens the first volume.

I feel, on the whole, a little shame, however, as I look on these four volumes & cast my eyes on their fellows four on my shelves — as though I had angled with a little sixpence & two I caught a dozen half-crowns in return.

I am,
Yours most gratefully,
J. H. Stirling.

FAC SIMILE LETTER OF STIRLING'S.

To face p. 350.

Dictionary of writers,[1] in which he was described as a "philosopher and critic," who had "profoundly penetrated the spirit of the system of Hegel," and whose prose was, "*à la fois poétique et précise, incisive et pittoresque.*" Such proof that his work was understood and appreciated in another country was no doubt pleasant to receive, as were also the letters from admiring disciples here and there throughout the world—even in far New Zealand—which, from time to time, reached the philosopher in his declining years. In January 1903 he had the pleasure of receiving in his house the members of the Scots Philosophical Club—a small society, composed of the philosophical professors of the four Scottish Universities, with two or three "honorary" members, of whom Stirling was one. Two other honorary members, both of whom were present on the occasion, were Mr A. J. Balfour (at that time Prime Minister), and the present Viscount Haldane of Cloan. In the philosophical discussion which took place, Stirling bore his part, as those present averred, with much of his old vigour and incisiveness.

That occasion seems to mark the close of a chapter in the lives of Stirling and his family. It was almost the last social event at which all the members of the little family circle, which had remained unbroken for more than twenty years, were present together. Only a few months later the family hearth was sundered by that "incommunicable gulf," across which one looks back with dazed eyes at one's past life as something dim, far-off, unfamiliar, which can never return again.

It was little more than a month after the meeting of the Scots Philosophical Club that Mrs Stirling was pronounced to be suffering from an incurable malady—failure of the heart. During her life as

[1] *Dictionnaire manuel-illustré des Écrivains et des Littérateurs.* (Armand Colin, Paris.)

wife and mother, she had identified herself so completely with husband and children that she hardly seemed to have any "self" apart from them—so much so that one of her family once remarked that to think of her apart from husband and children was as impossible as to think of substance without qualities. Yet now she had to face the thought of leaving all she loved, of setting out alone on that unknown journey, from which there is no return. For months before the end she knew it must come; suffering no pain, in full possession of consciousness and faculties, she waited for it—at first in silent human anguish at the thought of parting from those she loved, but later, with the light of eternity in her face.

As for Stirling, he resolutely refused to believe what was so obvious to everyone else—almost to the very last, he refused to believe it. When the end came, he broke down utterly.

During the months before his wife's death (on 5th July 1903), he had been engaged on his little book, *The Categories*, which, as was said above, is in some sort an appendix to *What is Thought?* When, in the following October, it was published, it bore, by way of dedication, this tribute to her memory:—

"To the Memory of
MY WIFE
Whose irreparable loss is associated inseparably
With its Publication
I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK
To me she was
The Sweetest Woman and the Most Ingenuous
The Truest Wife and the Faithfulest
That in the Will of God
Ever Blessed Man."

Friends who knew of the long years that Stirling

MRS. HUTCHISON STIRLING.
(From photo by Crooke, Edin.)

To face p. 352, vol. ii.

and his wife had lived together—of their love for each other, of her graciousness, sweetness, unselfishness—did what they could to soften with their sympathy the blow which had fallen on the aged philosopher. Among several to whom some expression of gratitude is due, mention should perhaps be specially made of Dr James Mitchell. Both in 1903, and six years later when the second blow fell, he sorrowed with the sorrowing, making their grief his own.

Of *The Categories* perhaps there is not, at this point, much that requires to be said. Considering that it is the work of a man of nearly eighty-three, the little book is quite remarkable for its terseness and clearness. A serious student of Hegel would find much that was new and valuable and of special interest in Chapter II. ("The Double Statement"), and in Chapter III. ("Categories and Physics") the reasoning of *Darwinianism* is contained in summary, as well as much that is fresh. Writing to Professor Laurie on the last day of October 1903, the author himself says of the little book: "Please find in Chap. I. complete comparison of Logical and Phenomenological, together with the Last of the Secret, etc., etc., etc.,—in Chap. II. discussion of a beginning, etc. (Causality thrown in), also, in a hand's breadth, all Darwin and the truth of Evolution."

Perhaps it may be permitted to revert for a moment to this last subject (*Darwinism*), which has already been touched on in the previous chapter, in order to state at the briefest possible the substance of what is said regarding it in Stirling's last little book. His (Stirling's) objections might perhaps be not unfairly summarized under the following two heads—but those two are surely unanswerable and conclusive:—

First: Darwin's method of procedure—of reaching his conclusions—was utterly unscientific and unreliable.

Second: His conclusions themselves were entirely unsupported either by facts or reasoning.

Under the first head, Stirling points out that Darwin's way of reaching a conclusion was *not* by slow and careful induction from a large number of undisputed facts—which is the accepted method of experimental science—but the reverse of this. It was, in fact, to get hold—somehow—of a "theory," a conjecture, and then to collect the facts which fitted in with it—disregarding, of course, those which did not! Darwin had, as Stirling shows, an inherited instinct for theorizing.

"Now, the love of hypothesis as quite a family *tick* is admitted. And Mr Francis Darwin has, of his father, these strong words: 'It was as though he were charged with theorizing power ready to flow into any channel on the slightest disturbance, *so that no fact, however small, could avoid releasing a stream of theory, and thus the fact became magnified into importance; in this way it happened that many untenable theories occurred to him.*'"[1]

The method of procedure, the kind of mind, indicated here is precisely that which, whether by writers on science, or teachers of logic, one has been accustomed to be warned against as *peculiarly unscientific.* No conclusion, we are told, must be reached *per saltum;* and no hypothesis can be accepted unless substantiated by the unanimous evidence of all the known facts. One contradictory fact is enough to invalidate a hypothesis; but, as we saw in last chapter, Darwin's Law of Natural Selection is contradicted by numerous instances of reversion and atavism.

It is, indeed, *per saltum* that he (Darwin) appears to have usually reached his conclusions.

"*That it is conceivable,*" as Stirling says (*The Categories*, p. 101), "has the force of fact for Mr Darwin. 'It is conceivable that flying fish *might* have been modified into perfectly winged animals

[1] The italics are ours.

. . . and so I cannot doubt that during millions of generations individuals of a species *have* been born so and so!'"

It seems scarcely necessary to point out that such an attitude of mind as that indicated here has nothing to do either with *fact* or *reasoning*—the two pillars on which the edifice of science claims to be reared. One cannot but sympathize with Stirling when he exclaims, "Oh, if for it all there were but sound logic and existential fact!"

"The whole of Mr Darwin's single action and one thought lies here:—'Favourable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones to be destroyed.' 'Here, then,' says Mr Darwin, 'I had at last got a *theory* by which to work.' Theory is rather too big a word; it implies a complex of correlated particulars. Mr Darwin's 'theory' was a simple idea—this, namely, that the progeny of an organism exhibited some variation, never mind how slight, from its parent before it. On that simple idea Mr Darwin turned; his whole soul flashed, kindled, and his mind flew open. It belonged to his simple, ingenuous, sincere, *straight*, instantaneous nature to dwell here, on and on, as in a world of consequences. A variation, however accidental, might not just come and go; *it might have consequences.* . . . 'The result would be the formation of a new species!'" (*The Categories*, pp. 112-113.)

"And so . . . he [Darwin] confined himself, not to natural history as a study to be perfected, but to the gathering together of a commonplace-book compilation, in which every word that made for a natural explanation of life and living beings might be adopted and signalized. Accordingly, as he says himself, he read all manner of 'agriculturists and horticulturists'; he depended on answers to all manner of 'printed inquiries' sent out to all manner of 'breeders and gardeners'; not less on 'conversations' with such. . . . So it was that he came to his organic physics—Natural Selection. Was it so that Newton came to his *inorganic physics—Gravitation?* . . . When the one [Newton], so modestly confident, declared that so and so *is*, now that the law of Gravitation is discovered, was it just the same thing and fact when the

other (Mr Darwin) . . . declared that so and so *is* '*now* that the law of Natural Selection is discovered'?

"Where is that law? 1. A *variation*, a mere thing of accident and chance, whether from within or without; 2. By mere chance, unforeseen, unlooked-for, a *profit* from it (*i.e.*, a casual, fortuitous use and application of it)—an accident—two accidents: The accident of an accident! Good heavens! Is that a *law?*" (*The Categories*, pp. 111-112.)

In the last sentence quoted we have passed from the first "head" mentioned above (*i.e.*, Stirling's objections to Darwin's method) to the second (his criticism of the conclusions of Darwinism). Under the latter, there is no need to add, to what has already been said in last chapter, more than the following extract from Darwin himself, quoted by Stirling in *The Categories*, and his (Stirling's) comments on it:—

"'In fact the belief in natural selection must at present be grounded entirely on general considerations—we cannot prove that a single species has changed; nor can we prove that the supposed changes are beneficial, *which is the groundwork of the theory*.' . . . If any reader will honestly follow out these admissions into their constitutive content, he will wonder what in all the world is left Mr Darwin at last. Why, in sober and good truth, there is nothing left Mr Darwin at last but Mr Darwin himself—looking away out there into 'millions of generations' in dream! And the public thought this dream, this mere imagination, was a scientific apodictic proof of all these innumerable species of plants and animals being sprung from a single slight variation of accident and chance in a piece of 'proteine compound' that, 'some time or other,' had just 'appeared'—'by some wholly unknown process'! . . . And here the idea of Origin—of Origin as *Origin*—cannot but force itself in upon us. If a First, a pre-existent First, has to be postulated . . . why is there any claim of Origin? . . . Origin—as currently interpreted by the public at large . . . who believed that Mr Darwin proposed to initiate them into the origin, not merely of species derived from species, but of the very creatures themselves that constitute species—*origin* can only demonstrate itself as a palpable misnomer."

In a word, according to Stirling, the *Origin of Species* has nothing to do with *origin*, but only with *modification*, and the Law of Natural Selection is only a baseless conjecture, and not a *law* at all.

To Stirling, Darwinism was in science what Robespierre was in politics—*the last word of the Aufklärung* (or, rather, of its degraded form, the *Aufklärerei*)—the stripping off, from nature and human nature, of the last rag of order and reason left by the "men of the Revulsion," leaving the universe bare of all save accident, chance, unreason.

"A mad world, my masters!" says Shakespeare; and Stirling adds, "Yes, but *the keepers will come*."

Perhaps the age of its author prevented *The Categories* from receiving the amount of attention to which the clear and concise argument contained in it entitled it. The following extract from a letter from Professor Laurie (dated 15th Nov. 1903) appears to appraise the little book at its true value. "It would be absurd," Laurie writes, "to compare it [*The Categories*] with your greater works, but yet I think it the most *effective* pronouncement you have made. Thought and manner fit into each other beautifully, and it is an immense pleasure to an old friend to see that your hand is as vigorous as ever. I believe the parts on Darwin and religion will be of great service to many a bewildered young 'scientist.' . . . Everything from your pen is characteristic and full of instruction and encouragement to all who wish to believe in God, who is certainly not in fashion in these days."

It is not without intention that it has been left to the last chapter to speak of Laurie and of Stirling's friendship for him. He was the last of the three men, referred to more than once in the previous pages, who "stood closest" to the philosopher in his maturity and old age—the last, but assuredly not the least. The friendship between Stirling and Laurie, in fact, stood on a footing of greater

equality than that between Stirling and the other two friends previously spoken of. Laurie was no less admiring of Stirling's intellectual achievements than either Henderson or Cupples; but he was of a stronger, more independent, character and intellect. Less purely literary than George Cupples, he was more philosophical (indeed, he was himself a philosopher—author of several important philosophical works), and he possessed, moreover, unlike Cupples, a practical wisdom, a knowledge of the world and of human character, which are not usually found united with a love of metaphysical speculation.

It was no doubt the publication of the *Secret of Hegel* which made Stirling and Laurie acquainted with each other. In a letter of Stirling's to Cupples, dated July 1866, we have an allusion to what was doubtless the beginning of their acquaintance. "Mr Simon Laurie sent me his book on *Ethics*. From an English point of view, I found it good . . . I missed the German element, however . . . he [Laurie] promised to call on me . . . am disposed to think very highly of him, especially in a moral point of view." Two years later, Stirling writes to Ingleby: "He [Laurie] is a most accomplished scholar—reads German, too—hard at K. and H. —a most amiable—fearlessly (*unwittingly* fearless, too) candid man."

Perhaps in this last sentence Stirling has touched upon the quality for which those who knew Laurie well admired him most—his fearless candour—though, as will be readily understood, that very quality was sometimes the means of making enemies for its possessor. He was emphatically a manly man—brave, strong, self-reliant—yet he undoubtedly possessed one virtue which is usually supposed to be the peculiar property of the softer sex—unselfishness. If it was for his fearless candour, his honesty, his robust intellect, his strong common-sense that

his friends admired Laurie, it was for the unselfishness, the generosity, the broad humanity, the warm affection of the man that they loved him. No doubt, there were people who saw in him only the faults of his virtues—people by whom his strength and decision of character were set down as dogmatism, his fearless candour was regarded as pugnacity, his vehemence in denouncing falsehood or folly was stigmatized as intolerance. But those were people on the outside—and such there will always be. Those on the inside knew that he possessed an absolute genius for friendship. True and loyal, he gave his friend his admiration, his love, his advice, his help, while retaining always his own self-respect, his own independence of judgment. He was never what Emerson calls a "mush of concession" to his friend.

Apart from the family affection with which he was surrounded, it was his friendship with Professor Laurie that formed the chief solace of Stirling's last years. The letters of the two men breathe the warmest affection for each other, and are written with an openness and unreserve that reveal how complete was the trust and confidence which they reposed in each other. A further proof—if any were required—of this trust and confidence is to be found in Laurie's self-reproach for having, for a few months, concealed from Stirling, as well as the rest of the world, his authorship of *Metaphysica Nova et Vetusta*, which he published under the name of *Scotus Novanticus* in 1884. A copy of the book had been sent by the publishers to Stirling, who, utterly unsuspicious of the identity of the author, acknowledged receipt of it, through the publishers, in a letter of some length in which he congratulated the writer "on the production of this remarkable little book," and entered into a somewhat detailed, and very favourable, criticism.

When, six months later, Laurie revealed his

identity with *Scotus Novanticus* (in a letter dated April 5, 1885), he admitted that though, on receipt of Stirling's letter about the book, he had felt "more pleased than if I had received the title-deeds of a county," he had been troubled in mind about keeping his friend in the dark as to its authorship. "It seemed a breach of friendship," he wrote—"at least of the *kind* of friendship I had with you. To me, as I hope you well know, you are the first of living thinkers; but the deep respect I have for you as a thinker is not greater than my personal affection for you as a man."

As a proof of how warmly Stirling, on his side, reciprocated Laurie's affection for him, the following letter will show (written twenty years later than that of Laurie, from which the above extracts are taken). It is dated the first day of the year 1905, and begins at once thus:—

"There!—that is the first time I write the new date, and I could not write it to a better than to

"My best Friend, — To whom I most sincerely wish all happiness for the new year; and to whom I must return one word, though I hope so soon to see him—one word in sympathy with the mood that wrote your letter of Dec. 27. Yes, the more one ponders, the stranger and more mysterious it seems! Why should there be existence at all? That—even though evil is as much inherent in the necessary contingence of externality as two right angles in the three—whatever angles of any triangle!

"But the Gifford![1] That is all right—you are the very man for it. What you feel is but the shiver before action. You will wonder at your own comfort the moment you have written."

During his last years, Stirling avoided all public gatherings, and, save for his daily walk, was seldom outside his own home. His friendship for Laurie,

[1] Professor Laurie had been appointed Gifford Lecturer in Edinburgh University.

however, proved stronger than his aversion to public meetings; and on more than one occasion he contrived to be present in the University class-room when Laurie was delivering one of his Gifford Lectures—in spite, too, of a friendly, half-jesting prohibition on the lecturer's part. "When sitting talking to you," Laurie had written on May 2, 1906, "I always think of you as about 55. This explains my selfish thoughtlessness in asking you to be present on Friday. Even if you drive up to the very steps, these are numerous. You *must not* come. If Flossy lets you, she will be punished by losing the next chess match. But send me a note, saying you regret, etc., etc. You see, if not wholly in your particular 'mansion,' I am in your philosophical Heaven, and it is satisfactory to me to feel that the mansion assigned to me is next door to yours."

Of Stirling's writings during those last years, only two remain to be mentioned—the first a critical notice of Professor Campbell Fraser's *Biographia Philosophica*, which appeared in *Mind* in Jan. 1905; and the second an *Appendix to the Categories* (published in 1907), the main object of which was to defend Emerson from a charge brought against him of being a supporter of the Darwinian theory of evolution.

It is perhaps not a little remarkable that those subjects should have been the last on which he should have written for the public; for both were associated with his youth, and must have carried his thoughts back to the distant past. Stirling and Campbell Fraser, though unknown to each other at the time, had, in 1833, sat on the same benches of the old Glasgow College; both of them had seen

"morning after morning, from the facing street, the twin lamps that just indicated the black devouring maw of the college entrance, as, right and left over its squared

sides, they brought ever to the student's mind images of Bitias and Pandarus, supporters of the gate, while he hurried along, even agitated by the very peculiar, small, sharp, quick, quick, quick, of that strangely instant catalogue bell, the stopping of which meant the shutting also of the class-room door, and the impossibility of an '*Adsum*' from him belated without to the call of his name within, with loss of the best of a certificate, uninterrupted attendance." (*Mind*, Jan. 1905, p. 86.)

Emerson, too, was associated with Stirling's youth, though with a later period of it than that to which the memories indicated in the above paragraph belong. "I was an idealist of the Emerson stamp," Stirling writes to Ingleby in 1869, "till —Kant and Hegel, in short." And now the last public utterance of the philosopher of nearly eighty-seven was devoted to the defence of the idealist, who had been the teacher of his youth, from the charge of materialism.

Briefly to indicate the substance of the defence, it is this: Emerson believed in Evolution—yes, but not as Darwin believed in it. Evolution was not to Emerson what it was to Darwin — the gradual transition of one form, or species, into another by natural generation, and under no rational principle—under no principle at all but accident. The evolution of Emerson was substantially the same as the evolution of Aristotle, or Hegel. He perceived that Nature was a "system of grades," rising up from "mechanic" to "organic," and so on, through lower and higher forms of animal life, to man; but it never occurred to him that these different grades were *naturally generated from each other in time*. These grades were to him the various steps in the manifestation of the Divine Idea. "No falser libel could have speech than to name an Emerson with a Huxley or a Darwin." (*Appendix to the Categories*, p. 15.) "Emerson! who only valued ideas—who knew that the world was hung on ideas—that

no sensuous appearance in it but had an idea under it—an idea in the mind of God." (*Ibid.*, p. 41.)

Brief though it is, there is much in the Appendix that would be worth quoting did space permit. As Laurie wrote to the author, it shows all his "old vigour and strenuousness." Before leaving the subject of Emerson, however, it is thought fitting to quote, as bearing upon it, this sentence from a letter of Stirling's to Mr Snaith, written in Nov. 1901:—

"I agree with you about Emerson and Carlyle. As you say, they 'were not very deep in philosophy' technically so-called. Both, however, had souls that just naturally in themselves, and supported by education generally, were really, in point of fact, deeply philosophic: they were both men of genius of the truest water."

During the last two or three years, Stirling had several sharp attacks of influenza, each of which, though he recovered from it, left him a little weaker and a little older than before. But he never complained of his weakness or infirmities—or, indeed, of anything else. In those last years, the impatience and vivacity of the *genus irritabile* dropped from him entirely. It seemed as if, as he neared eternity, he entered a region of eternal calm, peace, contentment. He was always calmly, gently cheerful.

On the occasion of his attacks of influenza, however, he showed that he still possessed the strong will which, nearly eighty years before, had carried the boy of eight along the unknown miles from Glasgow to Greenock. As soon as the fever was over, he would insist, in spite of the prohibitions of doctor and nurse, in dragging himself from bed, although he was so weak that, even with support on both sides, it was hardly possible to keep him from falling, even on the few steps between his bedroom and his study, where he would sink into his chair in a state of absolute collapse.

It is only a few years before the end that he writes (in Nov. 1905) to his friend Mr Snaith, "positively, so far as health goes, I am as well as ever I was—tongue, pulse, eating, sleeping, etc., etc. My friend Laurie wrote lately from the country asking after me as that 'young-old' man . . . I still walk round my garden of a morning; but one or other of my daughters *will* give her arm for my afternoon walk. It is my legs disappoint me. Not that they get tired on my walk; I miss my old nimbleness—I hate foot-stools, cats, pet-dogs, etc., as trials to steadiness—I quite appreciate catches for the hand, as, whether up or down, my own *double* stair rail."

A year or two later, even the morning walk round the garden had to be abandoned without the "daughter's arm"—one by one, the sails were being taken in as the vessel neared the harbour. It is a touching fact that Stirling's "best friend" may almost be said to have shared with him the last voyage. Though some eight years his junior, Laurie too was drawing near his end. For some two years or so he was more or less an invalid, being subject to violent heart attacks; and the two friends met but seldom. It was after an interval of some months, during which they had not seen each other, that they met—in Stirling's house—for the last time. There was a tender solemnity in the meeting (probably they both knew it would be their last); and Laurie seemed to set the seal upon their long friendship when, for the first—and last—time, he reverently pressed his lips to Stirling's brow.

On the following Xmas day (1908) they exchanged their wonted gifts; but not long afterwards both were taken ill. Stirling regained his usual health for a while, and his great interest, during the last two months of his life, was hearing the accounts of his friend's health. When, on March 3, 1909,

the news of that friend's death reached him, he wrote this tribute to his memory :—

"*We* know what he was : a man—a true man—open as the day, utterly incapable, almost even as it were in play, of anything but truth, truth. And entirely true was anything that he wrote—anything that he spoke. His writings went curiously home. I have heard individuals in his audience involuntarily say, half aloud, 'Ay, that is deep, and his own.'"

Little more than a fortnight later, he followed his "best friend" to the grave. It is an interesting coincidence, however, that the last letter he ever wrote (on March 12/09) was addressed to the last living link with his boyhood—Professor Campbell Fraser. As it is very short, it is given here in full :—

"Dear Professor Campbell Fraser,—I am very much obliged by your kind present of this remarkable little[1] volume. It is pretty well, concisely and happily in brief, a résumé of the whole of a philosophy lucidly put to the reader's intelligence. It recommends itself pointedly to me by ending in—by being all through, indeed—spiritualism as the true root of the universe, against the crass materialism and shallow irreligion of the present day.—I am very sincerely yours,

"J. H. Stirling."

Only a few days later he was pronounced to be suffering from pneumonia. This was on Wednesday at noon. On Friday, in the cold, unhappy hour before the grey dawn of that March morning (the 19th) his laboured breathing gradually became more gentle till it ceased altogether ; his eyes, which had kept constantly open during the illness, looking upwards, closed peacefully. With what those present felt to be a conscious, and purposeful act,

[1] *Berkeley and Spiritual Realism* in "Philosophies Ancient and Modern" series.

he laid himself backwards (the difficulty of breathing had necessitated an almost sitting position), and stretched himself to his full length. The look upon his face was more than peaceful—it was triumphant. The imprisoned soul had shaken off the shackles of the flesh, and knew itself free.

During those last days he had more than once been heard to murmur his wife's name, as if he saw her. Three days later (on March 22nd) he was laid beside her in Warriston Cemetery, Edinburgh—in the spot which he had himself chosen six years before.

Of the many tributes to his memory from earnest students who gladly owned their debt to the philosopher, only a very few can be quoted here. "He had a noble character, as well as a great intellect," one professor of philosophy writes, "and he exerted a lasting influence on many an eager student, who will bless him to-day for the light and help he gave in the higher thinking." His "splendid philosophical work," writes another, "will always be borne in grateful remembrance by us who were brought to see by his insight, and found inspiration in his enthusiasm. I cannot reckon how much I have learned from him and his writings." "I owe more to his work than to that of any other single author," is the opinion of a third; while a fourth states, "My admiration and affection for him have grown in depth and strength as I was privileged to watch his beautiful old age."

The above are some of the tributes of philosophical experts to the memory of the man whom they honoured as their master. The following are from men not specially philosophical. "Those who knew [him] will miss him, not only as a great philosopher, but even more as a Personality which inspired universal affection and respect."

"What a thing it is to leave behind one such a

record of great achievement, and such an enduring spiritual influence as [he] does." "He was a great man . . . but what I most venerate him for is his magnificent work in the cause of idealism. . . . I think it one of the great things in my life that I knew him." "He was the last of the Masters. There are many clever men left, but there is no Master now—with the mass and weight and reserve of power that characterize that rare class."

Lastly, this sentence from the author of *Mark Rutherford* expresses what we must all wish could be said of us when our time comes: "Few men—hardly one that I know—have done so thoroughly the work they were sent to do. He has gone to his deserved rest."

CONCLUSION

And now it only remains to indicate in a word, if it be possible, the nature of the service which Stirling has rendered—not to the student of philosophy (with him we are not here concerned), but to mankind in general. Referring to the remark of Mr Hale-White's with which the last chapter concluded, let us try to see what it was that Stirling was "sent to do."

The writer of a recent short notice of him[1] remarks: "He [Stirling] set himself at once to grapple with the difficulties, and to unfold the principles, of the Hegelian dialectic, and by his efforts introduced *an entirely new spirit into English philosophy*." What the writer here calls a "new spirit" is perhaps the same thing as has been frequently alluded to in the foregoing pages—the recognition, on Stirling's part, of the supreme importance of "patiently assimilating the Historic Pabulum." It was because he recognised this that, though with his remarkable originality he might have made an independent name for himself, he was content to take his place as the interpreter of another writer, resisting what he called the "impatience of vanity"—the natural ambition of genius to shine by its own light.

It is this—with all that it implies—which perhaps constitutes the most important lesson of Stirling's life. For it implies that Truth *is*, and that it is capable of attainment by thought—not the thought of a single individual, or even of a single generation (the "Absolute cannot be *hopped* to"), but by successive generations of thinkers carrying on the work of those who have gone

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica* (latest edition).

before. It was not for nothing that the author of the *Secret* put on the title-page of his book this motto from his master, Hegel: "The Hidden Secret of the universe is powerless to resist the might of thought; it must unclose itself before it, revealing to sight and bringing to enjoyment its riches and its depths."

But it is not by guesses, by theories and conjectures, however clever and ingenious, that the Secret is to be reached. "There are those," Stirling remarks in *The Categories* (p. 157)—"there are those who, having curiosity to know and philosophize this world, just at once look away off, as it is said, *ins Blaue hinein*—into the Blue, *εἰς τὸν ὅλον οὐρανόν*—and start on their *Pasear*[1] just as they are"; but this is not the way of the true philosophers—the men who have taken their place in the Philosophic Succession, who, throughout the centuries of the world's history, amid the cries of the moment—the dust of mushroom "systems and creeds"—have been silently measuring, and digging, and laying the metal of, the great highway that is ultimately to lead to the goal.

"Historic Pabulum" is, of course, Stirling's own expression. What all thinking men and women have to do at present is doubtless to realize that there *is* a Historic Pabulum, and to learn precisely what it means. In such knowledge they will find stability, security, a foundation for all their thoughts and reasonings, a common meeting-place for all rational beings. They will no longer be tossed to and fro between the conflicting opinions of rival writers, equally authoritative because equally baseless, equally *subjective*, equally unconnected with the Philosophic Succession. They will no longer be at the mercy of every intellectual Pretender who thinks himself competent

[1] A word adopted from Bret Harte, meaning a slow walk, or promenade.

to spin a philosophy or a religion out of his own inside, as the spider spins its web; they will know that, in the realm of thought, there is a legitimate succession, that there are kings by Divine Right, not of physical, but of spiritual, descent—men who owe their place in the line of monarchs to their patient assimilation of the accumulated wisdom and learning of those who have gone before them.

When all this has been realized—when writers and thinkers and teachers have recognized the fact that it is not by squeezing the marrow out of their own bones that they can feed the hungry multitudes, but by first patiently assimilating the Historic Pabulum, and then giving it out in the form best suited to the needs of the time—an important stage in the advance of mankind will have been reached. What saving of time and thought and labour when each new worker, instead of digging a yard or two of a new road of his own that leads nowhither, will devote his strength to the carrying forward of the great high road! We are "heirs of all the ages"; but until we consent to assimilate the Historic Pabulum, we have not entered into possession of our inheritance. "The historical pabulum is the thing," Stirling writes to his friend Dr Ingleby in May 1870; "Mill & Co. are mushrooms in England for want of it. The interest to be settled is the form historical philosophy took when it passed into Germany. Not only do I know that students increase daily, and that all the knowing ones round me acknowledge that that is to be the thing 'presently'; but I never look into Hegel without being absolutely convinced of the absolute necessity of all those 'supreme generalizations' being made a common property."

In an earlier chapter of the present volume, an attempt was made to prove that what Stirling says in this letter, written forty-one years ago, is true

still—that the historic pabulum, as it is contained in the vessel of Hegel, has not yet been made "a common property," and that, until that pabulum has been assimilated, mankind will go spiritually hungry. Of course, when we speak of the "pabulum" here, we are not referring to the technicalities of the philosophy of Hegel (which belong only to the class-room and the student), but to what has been indicated in the foregoing pages—to the distinctions of Universal and Particular, of abstract and concrete, of subjectivity and objectivity, and all that they imply. These distinctions—and all that they imply—ought to be—will yet be—thoroughly realized by our teachers, preachers and legislators, and form the basis of our future systems of education, law and government.

"Man's *life* is in the crutch of the antithesis between universal and particular, for what lies in the hollow of that crutch is *thought* itself. Thought, in truth, is *nothing but* the very antithesis named. But, named as it may be, it is certainly to the *Spannung* between particular and universal that man owes at once his conscience and his generalization, or, what is the same thing, his religions, and philosophies, and arts, and sciences, and politics." (*Preface to Lectures on Philosophy of Law.*)

And it is Stirling, carrying on the work of Hegel, who has made this distinction explicit—a distinction which, once having grasped and made his own, the "individual soul finds itself on a new level, and with new powers." This applies, not to the student of philosophy alone, but to humanity in general; for philosophy is not mere idle speculation—it is, as Stirling says (in article in *Courant*, May 22, 1871), "the reduction of the whole of man's world to terms of thought, with theoretical light and practical guidance in all that concerns him as a rational animal."

Perhaps, however, it may be said—indeed, it has been said in the past—that Stirling has not

been "explicit," that he is no less obscure than Hegel, that he has not told the "Secret," but kept it. By such smart sayings did some who had not the intellectual patience and grip to grapple with the difficulties presented to them in the *Secret* console their wounded vanity and restore their self-satisfaction. Many readers, however, have long passed beyond this stage; and many more will yet pass it. A writer in the *Aberdeen Free Press* in 1897 says with regard to the *Secret*:—

> "The new terminology, the strange point of view, the reversal of the judgments of apparent common-sense, all tended to bewilder and confuse. We had as great a struggle to win the secret of Stirling as he had to win the secret of Hegel. It was an open secret, after all, when one obtained the keys. And now, after the lapse of years we read the book *and find it luminous*."

In those words there is the fulfilment well-nigh of the prophecy of Stirling himself, when, nearly thirty years earlier (in 1869), he wrote to Dr Ingleby: "What you say of the S. of H. [*Secret of Hegel*] is quite true now—all is so new, strange, and (being unfamiliar) uncouth. The time will come when any student will read it in a week."

In spite, however, of the progress in the comprehension of Hegel which has undoubtedly been made in the last half-century, the substance of Hegelianism (in which, as Stirling believed, lies the remedy for the unrest and discontent, the vanity and egotism of the present day) has not yet become the common property of humanity. "No man is final"—not even Hegel—but, according to Stirling, the German philosopher has not yet been thoroughly exploited, even by himself, and it is still with Hegel that the next generation of thinkers must begin.

> "Only the Greeks and the Germans, to say so, are *categorically* educated; and, as just referred to, Hegel of all mankind is the most so. His categories, and as they are, constitute at this moment the most complete body of

metaphysic—philosophy—that exists; but it by no means follows that, just as they are, they are final. The secret of the dialectic that deduces them has been given: *there are those coming who, on it or with it, will operate to constructions, combinations, configurations, that are beyond prophecy. It is for Philosophy itself to concentrate itself hither.*" (*The Categories*, p. 158.)

This, almost the last word of a man who had devoted a lifetime to the subject of which he is speaking, is surely impressive enough; but more impressive still, perhaps, are the following sentences from *Schopenhauer in Relation to Kant*, with which this Life of its author shall conclude:—

"No man but Hegel in this universe has produced, for this universe, *what may prove the key*—terms of explanation that at length come up to need. . . . If the key has been found for the casket of Hegel, and its contents described, it is quite certain that the public has never yet seriously set itself to apply this key, or examine these contents. Something to stimulate or assist seems still to be wanting. Much, of course, lies in the very temper of the time. *It is out of the materials of that casket, however, that we are to build the bridge, which, leaving the episode behind, leads to the long epic of the race.* Hegel's act is, probably, AS THE OPENING OF THE FINAL SEAL INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF MAN."

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